

A
PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL
HISTORY
OF THE *North*
SETTLEMENTS AND TRADE
OF THE
EUROPEANS
IN THE
EAST AND WEST INDIES.

By the ABBÉ RAYNAL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
THE REVOLUTION OF AMERICA.
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A NEW TRANSLATION.

WITH NOTES, LARGE ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS,
AND A COPIOUS INDEX.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for W. GORDON, A. DONALDSON, W. GRAY, J. BELL, J.
DICKSON, & P. ANDERSON, Edinburgh; W. ANDERSON, Stir-
ling; J. DUNCAN, & DUNLOP & WILSON, Glasgow;
ANGUS & SON, Aberdeen; & E. WILSON, Dumfries.

M, DCC, LXXXII.

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VOLUME THE FOURTH

Printed by W. Woodcock, 1, The Strand, London, W.C.2.
 and by J. B. G. & Co., 1, The Strand, London, W.C.2.
 and by J. B. G. & Co., 1, The Strand, London, W.C.2.
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PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL
H I S T O R Y
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E U R O P E A N S
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BOOK XI.

The Europeans go into Africa, to purchase slaves for cultivating the Caribbees. The manner of conducting this species of commerce. Produce accruing from the labour of the slaves.

SOME restless fugitives, the greatest part of whom had either been disgraced by the laws of their country, or ruined by their own debaucheries, in a state of desperation, formed the design of attacking Spanish or Portuguese ships that were richly laden with the spoils of the New World. Certain desert islands, whose situation insured success to piracy, served at first for a place of rendezvous to these plunderers, and soon became their country. Habituated to murder, they meditated the destruction of a plain and unsuspecting people, who had treated them with the greatest humanity; and the civilized nations, of which

these Buccaneers were the refuse, having adopted this execrable scheme without hesitation, it was immediately put in execution. It then, however, became necessary to consider what advantages might accrue from so many enormities. Gold and silver, which were still looked upon as the only valuable productions to be derived from America, had either never existed in several of these new acquisitions, or not in sufficient quantities to encourage the working of mines. Certain speculative men, less blinded by prejudice than the multitude, imagined, that a soil and climate, so totally different from ours, might either furnish us with commodities of which we stood in need, or which we were obliged to purchase at an exorbitant price: They, therefore, determined to apply themselves to the culture of them. There were some obstacles, apparently insurmountable, to the execution of this plan. The ancient inhabitants of the country were now exterminated; and, even if this had not happened, the weakness of their constitutions, their habits of ease and indolence, and invincible aversion to labour, would scarcely have rendered them fit instruments to execute the designs of their oppressors. These barbarians, too, born in a temperate clime, could not support the irksome toils of agriculture, under a burning and unwholesome sky. Self-interest, ever fruitful in expedients, devised the plan of seeking cultivators in Africa, a country in which the abominable and inhuman custom of selling its inhabitants hath ever prevailed.

*The Europeans
go into Africa,
in search of cul-
tivators.*

AFRICA is an immense region, connected to Asia by a narrow neck of land of only twenty leagues, called the Isthmus of Suez; a natural and political boundary, which the ocean must, sooner or later, break down, by that tendency it is observed to have of forming gulfs and straits eastward. This peninsula, which is cut by the equator into two unequal parts, forms an irregular triangle, one of whose sides fronts the east, the other the north, and the third the west.

THE

THE eastern side, which extends from Suez to the Cape of Good Hope, is washed by the Red Sea and the ocean. The interior parts of the country are but little known, and what is known, can neither excite the mercenary views of the trader, the curiosity of the traveller, nor the humanity of the philosopher. Even the missionaries, after having made some progress in these countries, especially in Abyssinia, totally discouraged by the treatment they met with, have abandoned this people to their inconstancy and perfidy. The coasts are, for the most part, only dreadful rocks, or a waste of dry and burning sand. Those parts susceptible of cultivation, are parcelled out among the natives of the country, the Arabs, the Portuguese, and the Dutch. Their commerce, which consists only in a little ivory or gold, and some slaves, is connected with the trade of the East Indies.

*Remarks on
the eastern
coast of Afri-
ca.*

THE northern side, which extends from the Isthmus of Suez to the straits of Gibraltar, is bounded by the Mediterranean. On this side, nine hundred leagues of coast are occupied by Egypt, and by the country which has, for several centuries, been known by the name of Barbary.

*Remarks on
the northern
coast of Afri-
ca.*

Egypt, which was the nursery of arts and sciences, of commerce and government, offers nothing that can recal to our remembrance the idea of its former greatness. Bending under the yoke of despotism, which the ignorance and superstition of the Turks have imposed on her, she seems to have no other intercourse with foreign nations, but by the ports of Damietta and of Alexandria, which serves to render them witnesses of her total declension and ruin.

The fate of ancient Lybia, now Barbary, is no less wonderful. The early periods of this extensive country are involved in the greatest obscurity. The cloud began to be dispelled at the arrival of the Carthaginians. These merchants, originally of Phœnician extraction, about an hundred and thirty-seven years before the foundation of Rome, built a city, whose ter-

ritory, at first very limited, in process of time, extended to all that country, known by the name of the kingdom of Tunis, and afterwards much farther. Spain, and the greatest part of the islands in the Mediterranean, fell under its dominion. Many other kingdoms must manifestly have served to aggrandize this enormous power, when her ambitious views interfered with those of Rome. At the time of this dreadful collision, a war between these two nations was instantly kindled, so obstinate and violent, that it was easy to foresee it would not terminate but in the utter destruction of the one or the other. That state, which was now in the height of its republican and patriotic principles, after the most skilful and the most stubborn engagements, obtained a decisive superiority over that which was corrupted by its riches. The commercial people became the slaves of the warlike power.

The conquerors maintained themselves in the possession of their conquests, till about the middle of the fifth century. The Vandals, then hurried on, by their original impetuosity, beyond the limits of Spain, of which they were masters, passed the pillars of Hercules, and, like an inundation, diffused themselves over the country of Lybia. These barbarians would certainly have preserved the advantages they had acquired by their irruptions, if they had kept up that military spirit which their king, Genseric, had inspired them with. But with this barbarian, who was not destitute of genius, this spirit became extinct; military discipline was relaxed, and the government, which rested only on this basis, was overthrown. Belisarius surprised these people in this confusion, extirpated them, and re-established the empire in its ancient privileges. But this revolution was only momentary. Great men, who can form and bring to maturity a rising nation, cannot impart youth and vigour to an ancient and decayed people.

In the seventh century, the Saracens, formidable by their institutions and their success, armed with the sword and with the Coran, obliged the Romans weakened by their divisions, to repass the seas, and augmented

augmented that vast dominion Mahommed had just founded with so much glory, with the accession of the northern part of Africa. The Caliphs lieutenants afterwards stripped their masters of the rich spoils, and erected the provinces committed to their care into independent states.

Such was the state of affairs at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Mahomedans of Algiers, who were afraid of falling under the yoke of Spain, invited the Turks to their assistance. The Porte sent Barbarossa, who at first protected, but, in the end, enslaved them. The Bassas, who succeeded him, and were the governors of Tunis and Tripoli, both conquered and oppressed cities, exercised a tyranny, which, very fortunately, was carried to such an height, that, from its excess, it must necessarily terminate in its own destruction; and the same violent measures that supported it, were exerted in delivering the people from oppression. One circumstance, however, is worthy of observation, that the three states adopted the same kind of government, which is a species of aristocracy. The chief, who, under the title of Dey, governs the republic, is elected by the soldiery, which is always Turkish, and constitutes the only nobility of the country. These elections are seldom made without bloodshed; and it is a common thing for a man, who has been elected in the midst of riot and slaughter, to be afterwards assassinated by a restless faction, who design either to secure that distinction for themselves, or to sell it for their advancement. The empire of Morocco, which has successively swallowed up the kingdoms of Fez, Tafilet, and Sus, because it is hereditary in a national family, is, however, subjected to the same revolutions. The enormities of the princes and the people are the primary cause of this instability.

The interior parts of Barbary are full of Arabs, who are what men in the primitive ages must have been, wandering shepherds, who have no settled habitations. Customs, which are disgusting to our effeminate manners, are considered by them either as great or simple, resulting from the dictates of Nature. When the most illustrious among the Arabians intend to receive a

stranger with marks of distinction, they go themselves in search of the choicest lamb of their flocks, slay it with their own hands, and, like the patriarchs of Moses, or the heroes of Homer, cut it in pieces, whilst their wives are employed in the other preparations of the festival. The children of the most distinguished men among them, even of Scheiks and Emirs, tend the family flocks. The boys and girls have no other employment during their tender years.

These happy manners are very different from the manners of those who live in towns, or inhabit the seashore. Equally averse to the toils of agriculture, and to the more sedentary arts, they are become pirates. At first, they contented themselves with ravaging the vast and fertile plains of Spain. They surprised, in their beds, the indolent inhabitants of the rich countries of Valencia, Granada, and Andalusia, and carried them off for slaves. Afterwards, disdaining the booty they acquired from countries they had formerly cultivated, they built large vessels, and insulted the flags of all nations. These naval equipments, which were gradually improved into little squadrons, received an annual accession, by means of the avarice of great numbers of Christians, who furnished the people of Barbary with materials for their armaments, interested themselves in their cruises, and sometimes even ventured to direct their operations. These pirates reduced the greatest powers of Europe to the disgrace of making them annual presents; which, under whatever name they are disguised, are, in reality, a tribute. They have sometimes been punished and humbled; but their robberies have never been totally suppressed*.

Charles V., though he was always busy in exciting commotions during the age in which he lived, yet he would

* There is but one step from homage to submission and dependence. Provided their power increases, there will be no failing without their passport; and, perhaps, they may one day make the attempt to establish themselves of new upon the continent of Europe, or dispute with us the possession of America. If Mahometism were introduced into the New World, it would make much greater progress than Christianity. A religion that took its rise in the torrid zone, should naturally prevail over the whole of that region in time.

would sometimes penetrate into futurity, by that foresight which atones, in some degree, for the faults of a turbulent spirit; and he partly foresaw what the people of Barbary might one day become. Disdaining to enter into any kind of treaty with them, he formed the generous plan of destroying them. The jealousy of Francis I. made his project miscarry; and since his time, history has it not in her power to celebrate any prince, for resuming the idea of so glorious an enterprise, the execution of which would be attended with no great difficulty.

The inhabitants of Barbary groan under a yoke of which they are impatient. The tyrant of Morocco insolently sports with the liberties and lives of his subjects. This despotic sovereign, an executioner, in the strictest sense of the word, every day exposes on the walls of his palace, or his capital, the heads of the innocent, or the guilty, whom he has slaughtered with his own hand. Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, though exempt from a like ferocity, are, however, under a severe subjection. Slaves to fifteen or twenty thousand Turks, who have been chosen from among the dregs of the Ottoman empire, they become, in an hundred different ways, the victims of this brutal soldiery. An authority resting on so tottering a basis, cannot possibly be firmly established, and might be easily subverted.

No foreign succour would retard its fall for a moment. The only power that might be suspected of wishing its preservation, namely, the Ottoman empire, is not so highly gratified with the vain title of Protector, which they confer on it, as to interest itself warmly in their safety. All endeavours to excite them to interfere, by submissions, which particular circumstances might probably extort from these robbers, would certainly be ineffectual. The wishes of the Porte would not impart strength. For these two centuries past, the Turks have had no navy, and their military power is continually decaying.

But, to what nation is the glory reserved, of breaking those fetters which Africa is thus insensibly preparing for us, and of removing those terrors, which are so formidable to navigation? No one nation alone
can

can attempt it; perhaps, if it did, the jealousy of the rest would throw secret obstacles in its way. It must, therefore, be the work of a general combination. All the maritime powers must concur in the execution of a design, in which all are equally interested. These states, which every thing invites to mutual alliance, to mutual good-will, to mutual defence, ought to be weary of the calamities which they reciprocally bring upon each other. After having so frequently waited for their mutual destruction, let them at length take up arms for their preservation. War, for once at least, will then become useful and just.

One may venture to assert, that such a war would be of no long continuance, if it were conducted with skill and unanimity. Each member of the confederacy, attacking at the same time the enemy it had to reduce, would experience but a weak resistance, or, perhaps, none. The people of Barbary, being thus suddenly deprived of all power of defending themselves, would undoubtedly abandon their masters and governors, and relinquish the government by which they have been constantly oppressed. Perhaps this noblest and greatest of enterprises would cost Europe less blood and treasure than the most trivial of those quarrels with which it is continually agitated.

No one would be so unjust as to suppose, that the politicians, who should form this plan, would confine their ambition to the filling up of roads, demolishing of forts, and ravaging of coasts. Such narrow notions would be inconsistent with the present improvements of reason. The countries subdued, would remain to the conquerors; and each of the allies would acquire possessions proportionate to the assistance they had given to the common cause. These conquests would become so much the more secure, as the happiness of the vanquished would be the consequence of them. This race of pirates, these sea-monsters, would be changed into men, by salutary laws, and examples of humanity. The progress they would gradually make, by the knowledge we should impart to them, would, in time, dispel that fanaticism which ignorance and misery have kept up in their minds. They would ever recollect with
gratitude

gratitude the memorable æra which had brought us to their shores.

We should then no longer see a country uncultivated, which was formerly so fertile. This immense tract of land would soon be covered with corn, and various delicious fruits. Their commodities would be bartered for the productions of our industry and of our manufactures. European traders, settled in Africa, would become the factors of this trade, which would prove of mutual advantage to both countries. A communication so natural, between opposite coasts, and between people who have a necessary intercourse with each other, would, as it were, extend the boundaries of the world. This new kind of conquest, which readily occurs to the mind, would amply compensate for those, which, during so many centuries, have contributed to the distress of mankind.

The chief impediment to so important a revolution, has been, the jealousy of the great maritime powers, who have obstinately rejected all expedients to re-establish tranquillity on our seas. The hope of checking the industry of every weak state, hath accustomed them to wish, that these piracies of the people of Barbary should continue, and hath even induced them to encourage these plunders. This is an enormity, the ignominy of which they would never have incurred, if their understanding had equalled their mercenary views. All nations would certainly profit from this happy change; but the greatest advantages would infallibly redound to the maritime states, in proportion to their power. Their situation, the safety of their navigation, the greatness of their capital, and an hundred other means, would secure them this superiority. They are constantly complaining of the shackles which national envy, the folly of restraints and prohibitions, and the confined idea of exclusive traffic, have imposed upon their activity. The people gradually become as much strangers to one another as they were in the barbarous ages. The void which is necessarily occasioned by this want of communication, would be filled up, if Africa were brought to have wants, and resources to satisfy them.

The

The spirit of commerce would have a new career opened to its exertion.

However, if the reduction and subjection of Barbary would not become a source of happiness for them, as well as for ourselves; if we are resolved not to treat them as brethren; if we wish not to consider them as our friends; if we must keep up and perpetuate slavery and poverty amongst them; if fanaticism can still renew those detestable crusades, which philosophy, too late, hath consigned to the indignation of all ages; if Africa must at last become the scene of our cruelties, as Asia and America have been, and still are; may the project which humanity hath now dictated to us, for the good of our fellow-creatures, be buried in perpetual oblivion! Let us remain in our ports. It is indifferent, whether they be Christians or Musselmén who suffer. Man is the only object that ought to interest man.

Do we hope to accustom the Africans to commerce, by the slow and gentle expedients of treaties, which must often be renewed, and as often purchased? To be assured of the contrary, it is only necessary to take a transient view of the present state of the Europeans with regard to these people.

The French have never trafficked with Morocco. They have always been in a state of war with it. The English, Dutch, and Swedes, disgusted by the repeated insults they have received, never appear there but occasionally. The whole commerce is almost entirely in the hands of Denmark, which hath committed it to a company, formed upon a capital of five hundred shares of 1,500 livres each (*a*). Its establishment was in 1755, and it is to continue forty years. It imports English cloth, silver tissues, and silks; some linens, iron, tar, and sulphur; and brings in exchange, copper, gums, wool, wax, and leather. These exchanges are made at Salée, Tetuan, Mongador, Safa, and Santa Cruz. One may judge of the extent of this commerce, by the profits of the custom-houses, which are let for 255,000 livres (*b*).

The

(*a*) 65 l. 12 s. 6 d.

(*b*) 11,156 l. 5 s.

The trade of Algiers is not so considerable. The English, French, and Jews of Leghorn, are rivals in it. The two first send in their own vessels, and the last under a neutral flag, cloth, spice, paper, hardware, coffee, sugar, linens, alum, indigo, cochineal; and receive in exchange, wool, wax, feathers, leather, oil, and several goods arising from captures. The returns, though a fourth more than the outgoings, do not annually exceed 1,000,000 livres (*c*). France has one half, and her rivals nearly divide the rest.

Independent of this commerce, which is totally carried on by the metropolis, there is some business done at Callua, Bona, and Collou, three other ports of the republic. This trade would have been extended and improved, if it had not been subjected to a foreign monopoly. Ancient treaties, which have been pretty commonly observed, have yielded this vast coast to an exclusive company established at Marseilles. Its capital is 1,200,000 livres (*d*); and its annual traffic in merchandize, which may amount to 8 or 900,000 (*e*), employs thirty or forty ships. It purchases with specie, corn, wool, coal, and leather*.

Tunis may receive 2,000,000 (*f*) in foreign merchandize, and sell its own for 2,500,000 livres (*g*). The French, in conducting this traffic, have two thirds of the profit, the Tuscans the rest. This commerce is supported and carried on nearly in the same manner as trade in general is carried on in other states of Barbary.

The trade of Tripoli is most limited. The country is so wretched, that nothing can be imported thither but some hardware of little value. The exports of wool, senna, ashes, wax, and pulse, are scarce worth notice. But though this coast is so little advantageous to commerce, by the supplies it can furnish; and though it is so prejudicial to it by the piracies that are exercised

(*c*) 43,750 l. (*d*) 52,500 l. (*e*) About 37,000 l. on an average.
(*f*) 87,500 l. (*g*) 109,375 l.

* It may be foretold, that their operations will diminish, in proportion as the exportation of corn, presently permitted in France, shall render the supplying of Provence more easy.

cised there, the western coast of Africa fully compensates these losses by the benefits it procures to the American colonies.

Climate of the western coast of Africa, known by the name of the coast of Guinea.

THE coast of this immense country extends from the straits of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope. All its inhabitants are black. The cause of this singularity has been the subject of much inquiry, and has given rise to a variety of systems. Theology, which hath got the ascendant over the mind of man, by the aid of enthusiasm; which hath taken advantage of the first fears of infancy, to create perpetual apprehensions in riper years; which hath deranged every thing, geography, astronomy, philosophy, and history; which hath chosen, that every thing should appear supernatural and mysterious, in order that she might assume the right of explaining them: theology, after having made one race of men guilty and miserable, by the fault of Adam, made another race of men black, as a punishment for the fratricide of one of his sons, namely, Cain, from whom, it is said, the negroes are descended. But, supposing their father was a murderer, it must be allowed, that his posterity have made a severe atonement for his crime; and that the descendents of the pacific Abel have thoroughly avenged the innocent blood of their father.

Almighty God! What dreadful extravagancies are imputed to thee, by beings who can neither speak nor act but by the constant energy of thy power and beneficence, and who represent thee as influenced by the ridiculous caprices of their own presumptuous ignorance! Are they men, or are they dæmons, who thus blaspheme thee; and, at the same time, presume to call themselves thy ministers?

But, waving the discussion of such ridiculous fancies, let us inquire, whether it be possible that the negroes should derive their colour from the climate they inhabit? Some philosophers and eminent naturalists are of this opinion. There are no negroes, say they, but in the hottest countries. Their colour becomes darker, the nearer

nearer they approach to the equator. It becomes lighter, or more bright, at the very verge of the torrid zone. The whole human species in general, contract whiteness from the snow, and grow tanned in the sun. One sees various shades, from white to black, and from black to white, marked out, as it were, by the parallel degrees which cut the earth from the equator to the poles. If the zones, imagined by the inventors of the sphere, were represented by real bands, one might perceive the jetty colour of the natives insensibly decrease to the right and left, as far as the two tropics; from thence the brown colour of the inhabitants grow paler and brighter to the polar circles, by shades of white, becoming more and more brilliant. But, it is somewhat remarkable, that Nature, which hath lavished the brightness of the most beautiful colours on the skin and plumage of animals, and on vegetables and metals, should, properly speaking, have left men without colour, since black and white are nothing but the beginning and absence of all colours.

Whatever be the original cause of that variety of complexion in the human species, it is agreed, that this complexion is owing to a gelatinous substance that is lodged between the cuticle and the skin. This substance is blackish in negroes, brown in olive coloured or swarthy people, white in Europeans, and diversified with reddish spots in people who have extremely light or red hair.

Anatomy hath discovered, that in negroes the substance of the brain is blackish; that the pineal gland is entirely black; and that their blood is of a much deeper red than that of white people. Their skin is always hotter, and their pulse quicker. The passions, therefore, of fear and love, are carried to excess among these people; and this is the reason why they are more effeminate, more indolent, more weak, and, unhappily, more fit for slavery. Besides, their intellectual faculties being nearly exhausted, by the excesses of sensual pleasures, they have neither memory nor understanding to supply, by art, the deficiency of their strength. Their hair, it is said, is curled, because, having to penetrate through a net-work of a more dense and tenacious

cious substance, it becomes twisted, and cannot be lengthened out. The sweat of the negroes diffuses a strong and disagreeable odour, because it is impregnated with that thick and rancid grease which hath been long lodged, and slowly oozes out between the cuticle and the skin. This substance is so palpable, that one may distinguish in it with a microscope a sediment formed in little blackish globules. Hence the perspiration of a negro, when it is copious, tinges the linen cloth which wipes it off. One of the inconveniencies of this black colour, an emblem of the night, which confounds all objects, is, that the negroes have been obliged, in order to be known at a distance, to flash themselves, and mark their skin with different colours. This custom is general, especially among the wandering tribes of this people. As we find it, however, established among the savages of Tartary and Canada, it may be doubtful, whether the practice does not rather arise from their roving way of life, than from the colour of their complexion.

Anatomy hath gone farther, and discovered the origin of the blackness of negroes in the source of generation. Nothing more, it should seem, would be necessary, in order to prove, that negroes are a particular species of men. For, if any thing discriminates the species, or the classes in each species, it is certainly the difference of the semen. The colour of the negroes, is, therefore, falsely supposed to be owing to the climate; since in Africa, under the same parallels, the eastern coast has no negroes, and even produces white people; and, notwithstanding the heat and soil of America, no negroes have ever been born in that country.

Though it should be allowed, that the western coast of Africa is the hottest region of the whole globe, the only inference to be deduced from this, would be, that there are climates proper only to certain species, or certain species adapted to particular climates; but not that the difference of climates could change the same species from white to black. The sun has not the power of altering and modifying the germina of reproduction. White people never become black in Africa, nor negroes white in America. An union, indeed, be-

tween the sexes of these two species, produces mongrels, who partake equally of the colour, features, and complexion of both. If man were originally white, it must be supposed, that, having been created nearer to the frigid than to the torrid zone, he peopled the earth successively from the poles to the equator; whilst, on the contrary, the fertility of the globe between the tropics, is a presumption, that it has been peopled from the equator to the poles.

The climate inhabited by the negroes, exhibits no variations but such as may be occasioned by sands or morasses. The almost insupportable heat of their days, is succeeded by very cool and refreshing nights; with this difference only, that they are less so in the rainy seasons than in the times of drought. The dew, less profuse under a cloudy sky than under a serene horizon, is undoubtedly the cause of this singularity.

FROM the frontiers of the empire of Morocco, as far as Senegal, the land is *Soil of Guinea.* totally barren. Some Arabs, the descendants of those who conquered Barbary, and some Moors, the ancient inhabitants of the country, lead a miserable wandering life amidst those burning and dry sands, which, at length, are lost in the vast deserts of Sahara.

The banks of the Niger, Gambia, and Sierra Leona, and those of some less considerable rivers, in that long space that intervenes between these principal ones, are very fertile. Maize grows there without much cultivation, as well as all the fruits that are natural to America; and the care of flocks constitutes almost the sole employment of the inhabitants. They are very fond of mares milk, which is their principal nourishment; and travel but little, because they have no wants to induce them to leave their country.

The inhabitants of Cape Monte, environed on every side by sands, form a nation entirely separated from the rest of Africa. In the rice of their marshes consists all their nourishment and their sole riches. Of this they sell a small quantity to the Europeans, for which they receive in exchange brandy and hardware.

From the Cape of Palmas to the river of Volta, the inhabitants are traders and husbandmen. They are husbandmen, because their land, though stony, abundantly requites the necessary labour and expence of clearing it. They are traders, because they have behind them nations which furnish them with gold, copper, ivory, and slaves, and because nothing obstructs a continued communication between the people of the country and those of the coast. It is the only country in Africa, where, in a long space, there are no deserts or deep rivers, to obstruct the traveller, and where water, and the means of subsistence, may be found.

Between the river of Volta and the river of Calbarry, the coast is flat, fertile, populous, and cultivated. This is not the condition of the country which extends from Calbarry to Gabon. Almost totally covered with thick forests, producing little fruit, and no corn, it may be said to be rather inhabited by wild beasts than by men. Though the rains are there very frequent and copious, as they must be under the equator, the land is so sandy, that, immediately after the showers are fallen, there remains not the least appearance of moisture.

To the south of the Line, and as far as Zaire, the coast presents an agreeable prospect. Low at its beginning, it gradually rises, and exhibits a scene of cultivated fields, intermixed with woods always verdant, and of meadows covered with palm trees.

From Zaire to Coanza, and still farther, the coast is, in general, high and craggy. In the interior parts of this country is an elevated plain, the soil of which is composed of a large, thick, and fertile sand.

A little beyond Coanza, a barren region intervenes, of above two hundred leagues extent, which is terminated by the country of the Hottentots. In this long space, there are no inhabitants, except the Cimbebes, with whom no intercourse is kept up.

The varieties observable on the shores of the west of Africa, do not prevent them from enjoying a very rare, and, perhaps, a singular advantage. On this immense coast, those tremendous rocks are nowhere seen, which are so alarming to the navigator. The
sea

sea is universally calm, the wind regular, and the anchorage secure. Several excellent havens are here to be met with, where the mariner, unmolested, may pursue the labours which the refitting of large ships require.

The winds and currents have nearly the same direction during six months of the year, from April to November. To the south of the Line, the south-east wind predominates, and the direction of the currents is towards the north. To the north of the Line, the east wind predominates, and the direction of the currents is towards the north-east. During the six other months, storms, by intervals, change the direction of the wind, but it no longer blows with the same violence; the spring of the air seems to be relaxed. The cause of this change appears to influence the direction of the currents; to the north of the Line, they tend to the south-west, beyond the Line to the south.

VAGUE conjectures can only be formed with regard to every thing which respects the interior parts of Africa; but it is a fact, well authenticated, that, throughout the whole extent of the coast, the government is arbitrary. Whether the despotic sovereign ascends the throne by right of birth, or by election, the people have no other law but his will.

Government, policy, wars, religion, and manners of the inhabitants of the coast of Guinea.

But, what will seem extraordinary to the inhabitants of Europe, where the great number of hereditary monarchies obstructs the tranquillity of elective governments, and the prosperity of all free states, is, that in Africa, the countries which are the least liable to revolutions, are those which have preserved the right of electing their chiefs. This is usually an old man, whose wisdom is generally known. The manner in which this choice is made, is very simple; but it is only suited to very small states. In three days, the people, by mutual consent, meet at the house of that citizen who appears to them the most proper person to be their sovereign. If the suffrages are divided, he who has obtained the greatest number of them, names, on

the fourth day, one of those who have had fewer voices than himself. Every free man hath a right to vote. There are even some tribes where the women enjoy this privilege.

Such is, excepting the hereditary kingdoms of Benin and Juda, the formation of that little group of states, which are to the north of the Line. To the south, we meet with Mayumba and Cילongo, where chiefs are admitted among the ministers of religion; and with the empires of Loango and Congo, where the crown is perpetual in the male-line, by the female side, that is, the eldest son of the king's eldest sister inherits the throne, when it becomes vacant. These people believe, that a child is much more certainly the son of his mother, than of the man whom she marries: they trust rather to the time of delivery, which they see, than to that of conception, of which they are not witnesses.

These nations live in a total ignorance of that art so revered among us, under the name of politics. They do not, however, neglect to observe some of its formalities and decorum. The custom of sending embassies is familiar to them, whether to solicit aid against a powerful enemy, or to request a mediator in their differences, or to congratulate others upon their successes, upon a birth, or a shower after a great drought. The envoy must never stay longer than a day at the place of his mission; nor travel during the night in the states of a foreign prince. He is preceded by a drum, which announces from afar his character, and he is accompanied by five or six friends. In those places where he stops to refresh himself, he is received with great respect; but he cannot depart before the sun rises, and and without the ceremony of his host assembling some persons to witness that no accident had happened to him. In other respects, they are strangers to any negotiations that are in the least complicated. They never enter into any stipulations for the past, nor for the future; but confine themselves wholly to the present. Hence we may conclude, that these nations can have no regular or settled connections with the other parts of the globe.

Their

Their system of war is as little complicated as their politics. Neither of the governments retain troops in pay. Every free man is by profession a soldier. All take up arms to guard their frontiers, or to make excursions in quest of booty. The officers are chosen by the soldiers, and the choice is confirmed by the prince. The army marches, and the hostilities which are begun in the morning, are commonly terminated in the evening; at least, the incursion never continues for any length of time; for, as they have no magazines, the want of subsistence obliges them to retire. It would prove a great misfortune to these people, if they were acquainted with the art of keeping the field fifteen days together.

The desire of extending their territories is not the cause of the disturbances which frequently throw these countries into confusion. An insult committed in a ceremony, a clandestine or violent robbery, the rape of a daughter; these are the ordinary occasions of a war. The day after the battle, each side redeems their respective prisoners. They are exchanged for merchandise, or for slaves. No portion of the territory is ever ceded; the whole entirely belongs to the community, whose chief fixes the extent which every person is to cultivate, in order to reap the fruits of it.

This manner of terminating differences is not peculiar to little states, whose chiefs are too wise to aspire after enlarging their dominions, and too much advanced in years not to be fond of peace. Great empires are obliged to conform to these principles, with neighbours much weaker than themselves. The sovereign has never any standing militia; and though he disposes at pleasure of the lives of the governors of his provinces, he prescribes them no rules of administration. These are petty princes, who, for fear of being suspected of ambition, and punished with death, live in concord with the elective colonies which surround them. Unanimity between the more considerable powers and the lesser states, is preserved as much by the immense authority the prince hath over his subjects, as by the impossibility there is of his exerting it as he pleases. He can strike but one blow at once. He may, indeed,
give

give orders that his lieutenant should be assassinated, and the whole province will strangle him, at his command ; but, were he to order all the inhabitants of a province to be put to death, no one would obey him ; and his will would not suffice to arm another province against them. His power against individuals is unlimited ; but he can do very little against the collective body.

Another reason, which prevents small states from being enslaved by great ones, is, that these people annex no idea to the glory of conquests. The only person, who appears to have been animated with it, was a slave-broker, who, from his infancy, had frequented the European vessels, and who, in his riper years, had made a voyage to Portugal. Every thing he saw and heard, fired his imagination, and taught him, that a great name was frequently acquired by being the cause of great calamities. At his return into his country, he felt himself greatly humiliated, at being obliged to obey people less enlightened than himself. His intrigues raised him to the dignity of chief of the Acanis, and he prevailed on them to take up arms against their neighbours. Nothing could oppose his valour ; and his dominion extended over more than an hundred leagues of coast, of which Anambou was the centre. At his death, nobody dared to succeed him : and, all the supports of his authority ceasing at once, every thing resumed its former situation.

The Christian and Mahommedan religion seem to have taken possession of the two extremities of that part of the west of Africa, which is frequented by the Europeans. The mussulmen of Barbary have carried their religious system to the people of the Cape de Verd islands, who have extended it still farther. In proportion as these religious opinions have been at a distance from their source, they have undergone so great an alteration, that each kingdom, each village, each family, maintained a different system. Excepting circumcision, which is universal, one would hardly imagine these people professed the same worship. This system extends no farther than the Cape of Monta, whose inhabitants have no communication with their neighbours.

What

What the Arabs had done to the north of the Line, for the Coran, the Portuguese afterwards did to the south, for the Gospel. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, they established it, from the country of Benguela to Zara. A mode of worship, which offered sure and easy means for the expiation of all crimes, was perfectly agreeable to the taste of nations, whose religion did not afford them such comfortable prospects. If it was afterwards proscribed in several states, the violence of those who propagated it, drew upon it this disgrace. It hath even been totally disguised, in the countries where it has been preserved; a few trifling ceremonies are the only remains of it.

The coasts which are in the centre between these, have preserved some local superstitions, whose origin must be very ancient. They consist in the worship of that innumerable multitude of divinities, or fetiches, which every person makes after his own fancy, and for his own use; in the belief of auguries, trials by fire and boiling water, and in the power of Gris-Gris. There are some superstitions more dangerous, I mean that blind confidence which they repose in the priests, who are the ministers and promoters of them; these have the sacred deposit of the national traditions, and pretend to prophecy. The correspondence which they are supposed to hold with the evil spirit, makes them regarded as the supreme arbiters of the barrenness and fertility of the country. Under this pretence, the first fruits are always offered to them. All their other errors have a social tendency, and conspire to render men more humane and peaceable.

The different religions, which are spread through Africa, have not changed the manner of living; because the influence of the climate there is so predominant, that opinions have but little effect upon their manners. The houses are always built of the branches of the palm-tree, intermixed with mud, and covered with straw, osiers, or reeds. Their whole furniture consists of baskets, earthen pots, mats, which serve as beds, and calabashes, of which all their utensils are made. A girdle round the loins is their only apparel. They live on game, fish, fruit, rice, or on bread made of maize,

maize, ill-baked. Their drink is the wine of the palm-tree. Arts are unknown amongst them. All their labours are confined to certain rustic employments. Scarce one hundredth part of their country is cultivated, and that in a very wretched manner, either by poor people, or by slaves, who, from their indolence and condition, have the greatest aversion to labour.

There is a greater variety in their manners than in their wants. On the banks of the Niger, the women are generally handsome, if beauty consists in symmetry of proportion, and not in colour. Modest, affable, and faithful, an air of innocence appears in their looks, and their language is an indication of their bashfulness. The names of Zilia, Calypso, Fanny, Zama, which seem to be names of pleasure, are pronounced with an inflection of voice, of the softness and sweetness of which our organs are not susceptible. The men are of a proper size, their skin is as black as ebony, and their features and countenances pleasing. The habit of taming horses, and hunting wild beasts, gives them a manly and dignified air. They do not easily put up with an affront; but the example of those animals they have reared, inspires them with boundless gratitude for a master who treats them with indulgence. It is impossible to find servants more attentive, more sober, and who have stronger attachments; but they do not make good husbandmen; because their body is not habituated to stoop, and to bend towards the ground, in order to clear it.

The complexion of the Africans degenerates towards the east. Most of the people of this climate are strong, but short. They have an air of strength, which is denoted by firm muscles; and the features of their faces are spread out, and have no expression. The figures impressed on their foreheads, and on their cheeks, increase their natural deformity. An ungrateful soil, which is not improveable by culture, hath forced them to have recourse to fishing, though the sea, which is almost unnavigable on account of a bar that runs along the coast, seems to divert them from it. Thus repulsed, as it were, by the elements, they have sought for aid among adjacent nations, more favoured by Nature,
from

from whom they have derived their subsistence, by selling them salt. A spirit of traffic hath been diffused among them, since the arrival of the Europeans; because ideas are unfolded in all men, in proportion to the variety of objects that are presented to them; and because more combinations are necessary to barter a slave for several sorts of merchandize, than to sell a bushel of salt. Besides, though they are well adapted to all employments where strength only is required, yet they are unfit for the internal duties of domestic life. This condition of life is repugnant to the manner in which they are brought up, according to which they are paid separately for every thing they do. And, indeed, the reciprocation of daily labour and daily recompence, is, perhaps, one of the best incentives to industry among all men. The wives of these mercantile negroes share all their labours, except that of fishing. They have neither the agreeableness, modesty, discretion, nor beauty of the women of the Niger, and they appear to have less sensibility. In comparing the two nations, one would be tempted to imagine, that the one is the lowest class of people in a polished and civilized city, and that the other hath enjoyed the advantages of a superior education. Their language strongly indicates their character. The accents of the one have an extreme sweetness, those of the other are harsh and dry, like the soil they inhabit. Their vivacity, even in pleasures, resembles the furious transports of anger.

Beyond the river Volta, in Benin, and in the other countries, known under the general name of the Golden Coast, the people have a smooth skin, and are of a dark black colour; their teeth are beautiful; they are of a middling stature, but well-shaped, and they have a bashful countenance. Their faces, though agreeable enough, would be much more so, if the women were not used to scar them, and the men to burn their foreheads. The basis of their creed is a metempsychosis of a peculiar kind: they believe, that, in whatever place they remove to, or wherever they are transported, they shall return after their death, whether occasioned by the laws of Nature, or by their own hands, to their own country. This conviction constitutes their happiness;

ness; because they consider their country as the most delightful abode in the universe. This pleasing error conduces to render them humane. Foreigners, who reside in this climate, are treated with respectful civility, from a persuasion, that they are come there to receive the recompence due to their conduct. This people have a disposition to cheerfulness, not observable in the neighbouring nations; they are inclined to labour, have a lively imagination, a solidity of judgement, principles of equity seldom altered by circumstances, and a great facility of adapting themselves to foreign manners. They are tenacious of their commercial customs, even when they are not advantageous to them. The method of trafficking with them, was, for a long time, the same that had formerly obtained among them. The first vessel that landed finished its traffic before another would enter upon theirs. Each had its turn. The price fixed for one, was the same for all. It is but very lately, that the nation hath been determined to avail itself of the advantages it might derive from the number of European nations frequenting its ports.

The people situated between the Line and Zaire, have all a great resemblance to one another. They are well made. Their bodies are less robust than those of the inhabitants to the north of the equator; and, though there are some marks on their faces, one never perceives any of those scars which are so shocking at first sight. Their food is simple, and their life frugal. They love ease, and never labour beyond their strength. Their feasts are accompanied with military sports, which revive the idea of our ancient tournaments; with this difference, that, in Europe, they constituted the exercises of a warlike nation, whereas, in Africa, they are the amusements of a timid people. The women are not admitted to these public diversions. Assembled together in certain houses, they spend their time in private, and no men are ever admitted into their society. The jealousy of distinction is the strongest passion of these people, who are naturally peaceable. A certain degree of ceremony is maintained, both at the courts of princes, and in private life. Upon the most trivial occurrences,

currenees, they fly to their friends, either to congratulate them or to condole with them. A marriage occasions visiting for three months. The funeral obsequies of a person of distinction continue sometimes two years. Those who were connected with him, in any degree, carry his remains about through the several provinces. The crowd gathers as they proceed; and no person departs, till the corpse is deposited in the tomb, with all the demonstrations of the deepest sorrow. So determined a taste for ceremony hath proved favourable to superstition, and superstition hath promoted a spirit of indolence. In these countries, the earth, sufficiently fertile, without requiring much labour, is only cultivated by women, whom servitude or penury condemn to this drudgery. Men slaves, or free men, if poor, are employed in hunting and fishing, or are destined to augment the retinue of the great. There is in this nation, in general, less equality between the two sexes, than is found among their neighbours. Birth and rank, here, impart to some women the right of choosing a husband, whom they keep in the most extreme subjection. Whenever they are dissatisfied with their choice, they have even the right of condemning him to slavery; and it is to be imagined, that they freely make use of this privilege, however humiliating it may be to the two sexes. For, what is that man, whom a woman can make her slave? He is good neither for her, nor for himself.

From Zaire to the river of Coanza, the ancient customs still remain; but they are blended with a confused mixture of European customs, which are not to be found elsewhere. It is natural to suppose, that the Portuguese, who have large settlements in this country, and who were desirous of introducing the Christian religion among them, had a greater intercourse with them than they had with other nations, who having only factories to the north of the Line, have been employed in nothing but their commerce.

The reader need not be told, that all we have related concerning the people of Guinea, ought only to be applied to that class, which, in all countries, stamps the character of a nation. The inferior orders, and slaves,

are farther removed from this resemblance, in proportion as they are debased or degraded by their occupations, or their conditions. However, the most discerning inquirers have observed, that the difference of conditions did not produce in this people varieties so distinguishable as we find in the states which are situated between the Elb and the Tiber, which are nearly of the same extent of country as the Niger and the Coanza. The farther men depart from Nature, the less must they resemble one another. The multiplicity of civil and political institutions, necessarily throws into the moral character, and into the natural habits, shades, which are unknown to societies less complicated. Besides, Nature, being more powerful under the torrid, than under the temperate zone, does not permit the influence of morals to exert itself so strongly. Men there bear a greater similitude to one another, because they owe every thing to Nature, and very little to art. In Europe, an extensive and diversified commerce, varying and multiplying the enjoyments, the fortunes, and several conditions of men, adds likewise to the differences which the climate, the laws, and the common prejudices, have established among active and laborious nations.

*Ancient trade
of Guinea.*

IN Guinea, trade has never been able to cause a sufficient alteration in the manners of its inhabitants. It formerly consisted of certain exchanges of the salt and dried fish, which were consumed by the nations remote from the coast. These gave, in return, stuffs made of a kind of thread, which was only a woody substance, closely adhering to the inner side of the bark of a particular tree in these climates. The air hardens it, and renders it fit for every kind of weaving. They make them up in bonnets of different kinds, scarfs, aprons for their girdles, varying in shape, according to the particular mode of each nation. The natural colour of the thread is a pale grey. The dew, which bleaches our flax, gives it a citron colour, which is preferred by people of the better sort. The black dye, generally used among the people, is extracted from the bark that makes
this

this thread, by simple infusion in water. As this thread readily takes all colours, this hath induced them to form of it different figures of men, birds, and quadrupeds. The stuffs thus worked, serve to hang their apartments with, to cover their seats, and for other kinds of furniture.

The first Europeans, who frequented the western coasts of Africa, fixed a value on wax, ivory, and gum, which intrinsically they did not possess. They gave an estimation to gold, from which they drew, at most, three thousand marks a year. Their restless avarice, which has never been satisfied with this produce, made them concert various expedients to augment it. They flatter themselves, that their designs will soon be successful, as will appear by what follows.

In the interior parts of Africa, under the twelfth or thirteenth degree of north latitude, there is, says a modern traveller, a pretty large country, known by the name of Bambuck. It is not subject to a particular king, but governed by village lords, called Farims. These chiefs are hereditary, and independent on one another, and are all obliged to unite for the defence of the state, when it is either attacked as a community, or only in any one of its members.

The territory of this aristocratical state is dry and barren. It produces neither maize, rice, nor vegetables. The insupportable heats it is subject to, proceed, in part, from its being surrounded by high mountains, which prevent the winds from refreshing the air. The climate is as unwholesome as it is disagreeable. Vapours, which continually issue from the bowels of a soil replete with minerals, render living there dangerous, especially to strangers.

The only thing that hath made this wretched country an object of notice, is, the gold, with which it abounds; which, in the eyes of the covetous man, seems to compensate for all the evils of Nature, though, in reality, it increases them all. It is so common in this country, that it is found almost indiscriminately everywhere. To obtain it, sometimes it is sufficient to scrape the surface of the earth, that is clayish, light, and mixed with sand. When the mine is very rich, it is dug

only to the depth of a few feet, and never lower; though it has been observed, that, the lower they went, the more gold the soil afforded. The miners are too indolent to pursue a toil which constantly becomes more tedious, and too ignorant to prevent the inconveniencies it would be attended with. Their negligence and their folly, are, in this instance, so extraordinary, that, in washing the gold, in order to separate it from the earth, they only preserve the larger pieces; the light parts pass away with the water, which flows down an inclined plain.

The inhabitants of Bambuck do not work these mines at all times, nor is it left to them to do it when they please. They are obliged to wait till personal or public wants determine the Farims to grant this permission. When it is proclaimed, all who are allowed to profit from them, meet at the appointed place. When their work is finished, a division is made. Half of the gold goes to the lord, and the remainder is equally distributed among the labourers. Those who want gold, at any other time than that of the general digging, go in search of it in the beds of the rivers, where it is very common*.

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* The French settled at Senegal, had long heard of the mines of Bambuck, without giving much credit to what was reported. So soon, however, as the certainty of their existence was established, they were desirous to obtain the possession of them; but, by the loss of the colony, this ambition was transferred to their conquerors. England was wholly taken up in finding out the means to appropriate these immense treasures, though the way to get at them, by the Niger, was more than three hundred leagues. If we are to give credit to the testimony of a modern traveller, the possessions of Goree are still nearer to this conquest, by the river Salum, which has always been neglected, for reasons too long to be explained at present, though it has lately been found capable of admitting vessels of three hundred tons. Besides being shorter, by the one half, this road is also easier than the other. The getting up the Niger, is attended with danger; the navigation is impracticable, except in the time of floods; and part of the voyage must be made by land, by reason of the rocks that obstruct the course of the river. Three months are hardly sufficient to surmount these difficulties; and, in one month, we may arrive there by the Salum, which presents none of these inconveniencies. These two rivers lead equally, the above obstructions excepted, to Galam, Tombut, and Bamburras, abounding less in gold than Bambuck, but notwithstanding very rich.

Whichever

The French and English have successively cast an envious eye on these real and imaginary riches. Some thought they could arrive at this country by the Niger, others by the Salum. Far from having succeeded in their attempts of becoming masters of it, they have not yet ascertained its existence. The unsuccessfulness of past efforts, hath redoubled the activity of sanguine minds: sensible and judicious merchants have chosen to limit themselves to a commerce much more important, which is, that of slaves.

THE property which some men have acquired over others, in Guinea, is of very high antiquity. It is generally established there, excepting in some little districts, where liberty hath retired and concealed herself. No proprietor, however, has a right to sell a man who is born in a state of servitude. He can only dispose of those slaves whom he gets, whether by war, in which every prisoner is a slave, unless exchanged, or in lieu of compensation for some injury; or if he hath received them as a testimony of acknowledgement. This law, which seems to be made in favour of one who is born a slave, to indulge him with

New commerce of Guinea, or the slave-trade.

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the

Whichever of the two rival nations arrives first at the mines, either by the one way or the other, their ambition will not be more fully satisfied. The inhabitants of Bambuck know the value of their country. Long experience has convinced them of the passion all sorts of people have for this metal, and of the desire also which they have to make themselves masters of a country that produces it. This has inspired them with such a distrust, that every stranger is denied admittance into their provinces, who does not bring along with him what the sterility of their own soil obliges them to get from abroad. It would be difficult to convey into a country, at such a distance from the sea, forces sufficient to invade it; and Europeans would soon perish in the burning unhealthy sands, for want of subsistence. Alluring methods must be used to get access to them; and the most effectual means to gain the good-will of this nation, will be, to supply them with goods from the Moluccas, to let them have them cheap, and make them acquainted with new enjoyments. For this consideration, the Bambucks would, perhaps, give up the right of working their mines. In the expectation of this revolution, which, perhaps, may never take place, we shall carry on, in Guinea, a branch of trade, of much greater importance than all the gold in the world, that is, the slave trade.

the enjoyment of his family and of his country, is ineffectual, since the Europeans have established luxury on the coasts of Africa. It is every day eluded by concerted quarrels, which two proprietors mutually dissemble, in order to be reciprocally condemned, each in his turn, to a fine, which is paid in persons born slaves, the disposal of whom is allowed, by the sanction of the same law.

Corruption, contrary to its ordinary progress, hath advanced from private persons to princes. Contentions have been multiplied in order to procure slaves, as war is excited in Europe in order to procure soldiers. They have established the custom of punishing with slavery, not only those who have attempted the lives or properties of citizens, but those also who were incapable of paying their debts, and those who have violated conjugal faith. This punishment, in process of time, was inflicted for the most trivial misdemeanors, after having been at first reserved only for the greatest crimes. They have not ceased to multiply prohibitions of things indifferent, in order to increase the revenues raised from the fines, by increasing the number of offences. Injustice hath not been contained within any limits or restraints. At a great distance from the coast, there are chiefs, who give orders for every thing they meet with in the villages around them, to be carried off. The children are thrown into sacks; the men and women are gagged, to stifle their cries. If the ravagers are stopped by a superior force, they are conducted before the prince, who always disowns the commission he has given, and, under pretence of doing justice, instantly sells his agents to the ships he has treated with.

Notwithstanding these infamous arts, the people of the coast have found it impossible to supply the demands of the merchants. What every nation must experience, which cannot trade but with its nominal stock, has happened to them. Slaves are to the commerce of Europeans in Africa, what gold is in the commerce we carry on with the New World. The heads of the negroes represent the stock of the state of Guinea. Every day, this stock is carried off, and nothing is left them but articles of consumption. Their capital

tal gradually diminishes, because it cannot be renewed, by reason of the speedy consumptions. Thus, the trade for blacks would long since have been entirely lost, if the inhabitants of the coasts had not imparted their luxury to the people of the inland countries, from whom they now draw the greatest part of the slaves that are put into our hands. Thus, the trade of the Europeans, by gradual advances, has almost exhausted the only vendible commodities of this nation.

In the space of twenty years, this circumstance hath raised the price of slaves almost to four times what it was formerly. The reason is this: The payments they receive, consist chiefly of the merchandise of the East Indies, which have doubled their value in Europe. A double quantity of these goods must be given in Africa. Thus, the colonies of America, where the sale for blacks is concluded, are obliged to support these several augmentations, and consequently to pay four times more than they formerly did.

The distant proprietor, however, who sells his slave, receives less profit than the person received fifty years ago, who sold his slave in the neighbourhood of the coast. The profits intercepted by passing through different hands, the expences of transporting them, the imposts, sometimes of three *per cent.*, that must be paid to those princes through whose territories they pass, sink the difference betwixt the sum which the first proprietor receives, and that which the European trader pays. These expences continually increase, on account of the great distances of the places where there are still slaves to be sold. The farther off this first sale is, the greater will be the difficulties attending travelling. The expences will soon increase to such a degree, that, of the sum which the European merchant will be able to pay, there will remain so little to offer to the first seller, that he will rather choose to keep his slave. Then all trade of this kind will cease. In order, therefore, to support it effectually, our traders must purchase at an exorbitant price, and sell in proportion to the colonies; who, on their part, not being able to dispose of their produce but at an enormous price, will no longer

longer find people to consume it. But, till that time comes, which is, perhaps, not so distant as the colonists imagine, they will quietly live on the blood and labours of the negroes. They will find navigators who will hazard the purchasing of them, and tyrants who will sell them.

Slave merchants are united by a mutual confederacy; and, forming a species of caravans, in the space of two or three hundred leagues, they conduct several files of thirty or forty slaves, all laden with water and corn, which are necessary to their subsistence in those thirsty deserts through which they pass. The manner of securing them, without much incommoding their march, is ingeniously devised. A fork of wood, from eight to nine feet long, is put round the neck of each slave. A pin of iron rivetted, secures the fork in such a manner, that the head cannot disengage itself. The handle of the fork, the wood of which is very heavy, falls before, and so embarrasses the person who is tied to it, that, though he has his arms and legs free, he can neither walk, nor lift up the fork. When they get ready for their march, they range the slaves on the same line, and support and tie the extremity of each fork on the shoulder of the foremost slave, and proceed in this manner from one to another, up to the first, the extremity of whose fork is carried by one of the guides. Few restraints are imposed that are not felt by the persons who impose them. In order that these traders may enjoy the refreshment of sleep without uneasiness, they tie the arms of every slave to the tail of the fork which he carries. In this condition, he can neither run away, nor make any attempt to regain his liberty. These precautions have been found indispensibly necessary, because, if the slave can but break his chain, he becomes free. The public faith, which secures to the proprietor the possession of his slave, and which, at all times, delivers him up into his hands, is silent with regard to a slave and a trader, who exercises the most contemptible of all professions.

Great numbers of slaves arrive together, especially when they come from distant countries. This arrangement is necessary, in order to diminish the expence which

which is unavoidable in conducting them. The interval between one voyage and another, which, by this system of œconomy, is already made too distant, may become still greater by particular circumstances. The most usual are the rains, which cause the rivers to overflow, and trade to languish. The season most favourable to travelling in the interior parts of Africa, is from February to September; and it is from September to March, that the return of these slave traders produces the greatest plenty of this traffic on the coasts.

THE trade of the Europeans is carried on to the south and north of the Line. The first coast, known by the name of Angola, hath but three ports, open indifferently to all nations; these are, Cabenda, Loango, Malemba, and two, of which the Portuguese are the sole masters, St. Paul de Loando, and St. Philip de Benguela. These latitudes nearly supply one third of the blacks that are carried to America, who are neither the most intelligent, the most laborious, nor the most robust. The second coast, known by the general name of the Gold Coast, has more roads, but they are not equally favourable to commerce. The restraint which the European forts have laid in several places, drives away the dealers in slaves. They are to be met with in much larger numbers at Anambou and Calbary, where business is transacted with the utmost liberty.

Account of the places and manner in which the slave trade is carried on.

In 1758, there were exported out of Africa 104,100 slaves. The English have exported 53,100 for their islands; their colonists on the north continent carried away 6300; the French 23,500; the Dutch 11,300; the Portuguese 8700; and the Danes 1200. All these wretches did not arrive at the place of their destination. In the ordinary course of things, the eighth part must have perished in their passage. Every nation hath employed in its colonies such cultivators of land as it hath purchased. Great Britain alone has ceded four thousand of them to the Spaniards, and smuggled

smuggled about three thousand into the French settlements.

It would be a very great mistake to imagine, that America regularly receives the same number of negroes every year. Not to mention the considerable diminution in the number of expeditions to Guinea, on account of the war, the arrangements of the last peace have occasioned new lands to be cleared, which required extraordinary supplies. The number of men of which the African coasts are deprived every year, must be reduced to sixty thousand. Supposing that each of these slaves costs on the spot 300 livres (*a*), those barbarous regions receive 18,000,000 (*b*) for so horrid a sacrifice.

The French merchant will exclaim, we doubt not, on the price to which slaves are here reduced. No one is ignorant, that he purchases them much dearer; but it is likewise known, that the English and the Dutch buy them up at a better price, because they are not reduced, by the insufficiency of their Asiatic commerce, and the imperfection of certain manufactures proper for the African trade, to pay, as the French merchant does, for a commission, freight, and insurance, in order to draw from foreign ports certain merchandise, which it is impossible to do without. The Portuguese have still another advantage over these nations. They carry on their expeditions from Brazil; their exchanges are generally made with the tobacco and brandy of their country; and they maintain an exclusive trade on the coasts, which are two hundred leagues long, and between thirty and forty broad.

Excepting the Portuguese, all nations pay for slaves with the same merchandise. These are sabres, firelocks, gun-powder, iron, brandy, hardware, woollen stuffs, especially East India cottons, or those which are wrought in Europe, and coloured in the same manner. The people north of the Line have adopted, instead of money, little white shells, which we import among them from the Maldives. South of the Line, the European trade is without this article of exchange. There, small pieces of straw stuff, eighteen inches long,

and

(*a*) 13 l. 2 s. 6 d.

(*b*) 787,500 l.

and twelve broad, are used as marks of value. This real mark is only the fortieth part of an ideal value, which they call *piece*.

This word, from the time we have frequented Africa, is become the numerical term of all things that bear the greatest value. The price of each species of merchandise that we import there, is invariably fixed under the denominations of one, two, three, or more pieces. Each piece, in its original value, is nearly worth a pistole; and, for some time past, thirty-five or thirty-six pieces have been given for a negroe, all taxes included. The greatest of them is the fee that must be given to the factor, appointed by government, who always mediates between the vender and the purchaser, whom it is of consequence to make a friend, and who is become so much the greater, as the competition between the Europeans has increased, and the want of slaves has made him sensible of his importance. Another tax, which, though asked under the name of a present, is no less an extorted tribute, is, that which must be paid to the prince and his chief officers, for the liberty of trading. The sum is in proportion to the size of the vessel, and it may be valued at three per cent.

THE European nations have been of opinion, that it would be of advantage to their commerce, to form settlements on the coast of Africa. The Portuguese, who first traversed these immense regions, left everywhere the marks of their ambition, rather than of their wisdom. The weak and numberless colonies which they poured in, soon forgot a country, which had itself forgotten them. In time, there remained of these great conquests nothing but that vast space which extends from Zará to Cape Negro, from whence Brazil still draws its slaves. They have preserved, too, some isles of little consequence. Those which are situated at the west of Cape de Verd, produce salt, feed cattle, and serve as a place of refreshment for vessels going to the East Indies. Prince's Island, and St. Thomas, which are at the entrance of the gulf of Gabon, supply navigators

Are forts necessary, in order to procure slaves?

gators with fresh provisions, who, after leaving the Gold Coast, sail to America. They are both totally disregarded in the commercial world.

Though Portugal, even in the earliest times, derived but very moderate advantages from the coasts of Africa, it was yet so jealous of the sovereignty which it exercised there, in virtue of its discovery, that it thought no nation had a right to approach them. The English, who first ventured to question the right of these pretensions, about the year 1553, sustained the affront of having their vessels seized. A national war immediately ensued, and the superiority of arms put a final period to this tyranny. In process of time, the exclusive companies of England, who had embarked in this trade, successively formed factories without number, of which that of Cape Corse, situated on the Gold Coast, and that of James, placed in an island, at the mouth of the river Gambia, were, for a considerable time, the principal, and the most useful. Though many of them had been abandoned, there still remained sixteen, when the parliament, roused by the public clamour, determined, in 1752, to put a stop to this monopoly. The nation purchased of the proprietors all these fortified magazines, where there were no more than one hundred and twenty men, for the sum of 1,523,198 livres 13 sols (*c*). The expence of maintaining them, amounts, annually, to about 292,500 livres (*d*).

The English almost entirely engrossed the African trade, when the Dutch, in 1637, undertook to share it with them. The war they were carrying on against Spain, authorised them to attack the Portuguese settlements in Guinea; and they made themselves masters of most of them in a very short time. The treaty of 1641, secured the property of them to the republic. This state, pretending to enter into all the rights of the first possessor, intended to exclude her rival from these latitudes, and ceased not to molest her till the peace of Breda. The taking of Fort Mina, on the Gold Coast, was found the most important of all these conquests. It had been built in 1452, by the Portuguese,

(*c*) 66,639 l. 18 s. 9½ d.

(*d*) 12,796 l. 17 s. 6 d.

guese, who had enriched its territory, by planting sugar-canes, maize, different kinds of excellent fruits, and had supplied it with a number of useful animals, which they had imported thither. They drew from thence much gold, and some slaves. This settlement did not degenerate in the hands of the Hollanders, who made it the centre of all the factories they had acquired, and of all the business they carried on in Africa.

The prosperity of the Dutch, in this part of the world, was at its height, when they were attacked by Lewis XIV. This prince, who aspired after universal glory, seized an opportunity offered him by the war of 1672, of extending the terror which his flag carried with it on all the seas, even to the borders of Africa. He took from the Dutch the forts of Arguin and Portendis, which were at that time the general markets for gum. His subjects afterwards established on the coast several posts, which were obliged to be abandoned, either because they were injudiciously chosen, or because they wanted strength to maintain them. Since the time that France, by a series of errors and misfortunes, hath found herself under a necessity of giving up Senegal to the English by the last treaty, she hath nothing now remaining but the factory of Juida, and the island of Goree, where there never was, nor ever will be any trade. Some years ago, a settlement that would have been of advantage to Anambou, began to be formed, when the workmen were driven away by cannon-shot, fired in time of full peace, by the ships of Great Britain. An able merchant, who was then at London, at the news of this outrage, expressed his astonishment at a conduct so imprudent. *Sir, said a minister to him, who was in great favour with this intelligent people, if we were to be just to the French, we should not exist thirty years longer.*

The Danes, who settled in Africa a little after the middle of the last century, and who purchased of the king of Aquambo the two forts of Frederickburg and Christianburg, situated on the Gold Coast near each other, never experienced such indignant treatment. They owed the tranquillity which they enjoyed, to the

insignificancy of the trade they carried on. It was in so low a state, that they only fitted out a single vessel every two or three years. This trade hath been extended for some time past; but it is still far from being considerable.

If we except the Portuguese, all the European nations subjected their African trade to exclusive charters. The companies in possession of this monopoly, the bad consequences of which, all governments at last have felt, and put a stop to, fortified their factories, both in order to drive away strangers, and to oblige the natives to sell to none but themselves. When the districts in which these forts were erected, had no more slaves to deliver, trade languished, because the people in the inland countries preferred the conveying their slaves into free ports, where they might choose the purchasers. Thus, the factories, which had been of such advantage, when the coast was populous, are no longer so valuable, since the factors of them are obliged to make long voyages, in order to complete their purchase. The advantage of these establishments was lost, when the object of their commerce was exhausted.

In the slave trade, small vessels are preferable to great ones.

THE difficulty of procuring slaves, naturally points out the necessity of employing small ships for carrying them off. At a time when a small territory, adjacent to the coast, furnished, in a fortnight or three weeks, a whole cargo, it was prudent to employ large vessels, because there was a possibility of understanding, looking after, and comforting the slaves, who all spoke the same language. Now, that each ship can scarce procure sixty or eighty slaves a month, brought from the distance of two or three hundred leagues, exhausted by the fatigues of a long journey, embarked to remain five or six months in sight of their country, having all different dialects, uncertain of the destiny that awaits them, struck with the prepossession, that the Europeans eat them, and drink their blood; their extreme uneasiness alone kills them, or occasions disorders which become contagious, by the impossibility of separating the sick

sick from the healthy. A small ship destined to carry two or three hundred negroes, by means of the short stay it makes on the coast, avoids half the accidents and losses which a ship capable of holding five or six hundred slaves is exposed to. Thus, the English, who have extended this commerce as far as it would go, have adopted the custom of sending only vessels of an hundred and twenty, or an hundred and thirty tons, into the seas which extend from Senegal to the river Volta, and to fit out vessels a little larger only for Colbar, where the trade is more brisk, and where they make their principal cargoes. The French are the only people who obstinately adhere to the old mode. The town of Nantz, however, which alone carries on in Africa as much trade as all the other ports of the kingdom together, begins to get rid of its prejudices. It will undoubtedly entirely relinquish them; and all the merchants who conduct the same trade on their own bottoms, will follow its example.

THERE are abuses of the utmost consequence, to be reformed in this voyage, which is naturally unhealthy. Those who engage in it, commonly fall into two great mistakes. Dupes to a mercenary disposition, the privateers pay more regard to the port, than to the dispatch of their vessels; a circumstance, which necessarily prolongs the voyage, which every thing should induce them to shorten as much as possible. Another inconvenience, still more dangerous, is, the custom they have of sailing from Europe at all times; though the regularity of the winds and the currents has determined the most proper season for arriving at these latitudes.

There are seasons more or less favourable to the slave trade.

This bad practice hath given rise to the distinction of the great and little voyage. The little voyage is the straightest and the shortest. It is no more than eighteen hundred leagues to the most distant ports where there are slaves. It may be performed in thirty-five or forty days, from the beginning of September to the end of November; because the winds and the currents are favourable, from the time of setting out to the

time of arrival. It is even possible to attempt it in December, January and February, but with less security and success.

Sailing is no longer practicable in these latitudes, from the beginning of March to the end of August. One would have continually to struggle against the violent currents which run northward, and against the south-east wind, which constantly blows. Experience has taught navigators, that, during this season, they must keep at a distance from the shore, get into the open sea, sail towards the south as far as twenty-six or twenty-eight degrees, betwixt Africa and Brazil, and afterwards draw gradually nearer and nearer to Guinea, in order to land at an hundred and fifty, or two hundred leagues to windward of the port where they are to disembark.

This route is two thousand five hundred leagues, and requires ninety or an hundred days sail. Independent of its length, it deprives them of the most favourable time for trade, and for returning. The ships meet with calms and contrary winds, and are carried away by currents; water fails them, the provisions are spoiled, and the slaves are seized with the scurvy. Other calamities, not less fatal, often increase the danger that attends this expedition. The negroes, to the north of the Line, are subject to the small pox, which, by a singularity very distressing, seldom breaks out among this people till after the age of fourteen. If this contagion affects a ship which is at her moorings, there are several known methods to lessen its violence. But a ship attacked by this distemper, that is on its way to America, often loses the whole cargo of slaves. Those who are born to the south of the Line, avoid this disease by another, which is a kind of virulent ulcer, whose malignity is more violent and more irritable on the sea, and which is never radically cured. Physicians ought, perhaps, to observe this double effect of the small pox among the negroes, which is, that it favours those who are born beyond the Equator, and never attacks the others in their infancy. The number and variety of effects sometimes afford occasion for the investigation of the causes

causes of disorders, and for the discovery of remedies proper for them.

Though all the nations who carry on a trade to Africa, are equally interested in preserving the slaves in their passage, they do not all attend to it alike. They all feed them with beans, mixed with a small quantity of rice; but they differ in other respects in their manner of treating them.

The English, Dutch, and Danes, keep the men constantly in irons, and frequently hand-cuff the women: The small number of hands they have on board their ships, obliges them to this severity. The French, whose crews are more numerous, allow them more liberty, and take off all their fetters three or four days after their departure. Both nations, especially the English, are too negligent with regard to the intercourse between their sailors with the women slaves. The effects of this, occasion the death of three fourths of those whom the Guinea voyage destroys every year. None but the Portuguese, during their passage, are secured against revolts, and other calamities. This advantage is a consequence of the care they take to man their vessels only with negroes, to whom they have given their freedom. The slaves, encouraged by the discourse and condition of their countrymen, form a tolerably favourable idea of the destiny that awaits them. The quietness of their behaviour, induces the Portuguese to grant the two sexes the happiness of living together: An indulgence, which, if allowed in other vessels, would be productive of the greatest inconveniencies.

It is a generally received opinion, that the blacks, who are brought to America, are now sold at a higher price than they were formerly. This is a mistake, arising from this circumstance, that the purchaser pays attention only to the number of those arbitrary marks of value which he gives, instead of reckoning the quantity of those commodities he delivers in exchange. This proportion, which is the only exact one, will make him sensible, that the price of negroes is not increased, since they are purchased with the same quantity of those commodities as they were in the earliest

times. It is the value of money that hath changed, and not that of the unhappy slave.

*Manner of
selling the
slaves in A-
merica.*

EACH nation hath a manner of selling slaves peculiar to itself. The Englishman, who hath promiscuously bought up whatever presented itself in the general market, sells his cargo by wholesale. A single merchant buys it entire; and the planters parcel it out. What they do not like, is sent into foreign colonies, either by smuggling, or with permission. The cheapness of a negro is a greater object to the buyer to induce him to purchase, than the badness of his constitution is to deter him from it. They will one day be convinced of the absurdity of such a conduct.

The Portuguese, Dutch, French and Danes, who have no way of disposing of the decayed and weakly slaves, never charge themselves with them in Guinea. They all divide their cargoes, according to the demands of the proprietors of plantations. The bargain is made in ready money, or for credit, according to circumstances. When the term of payment is fixed for eighteen months, as it happens but too often in the French colonies, the negro's labour must, by that time, have brought in two thirds of the price paid for him. If that does not always happen, it is owing to particular reasons, the detail of which would be superfluous.

*Wretched con-
dition of the
slaves.*

IN America, it is generally believed and asserted, that the Africans are equally incapable of reason and of virtue. The following well authenticated fact will enable us to judge of this opinion.

An English ship that traded in Guinea in 1752, was obliged to leave the surgeon behind them, whose bad state of health did not permit him to continue at sea. Murray (so the surgeon was named) was then endeavouring to recover his health, when a Dutch vessel drawing near the coast, put the blacks in irons whom curiosity had brought to the shore, and instantly sailed off with the booty.

Those who interested themselves for these unhappy people, incensed at so base a treachery, instantly ran to Cudjoc,

Cudjoc, Murray's host, who stopped them at his door, and asked them what they were in search of. *The white man, who is with you,* replied they, *who should be put to death, because his brethren have carried off ours.* The Europeans, answered the generous host, *who have carried off our countrymen, are barbarians; kill them, whenever you can find them.* But he who lodges with me is a good man; he is my friend; my house is his fortress; I am his soldier, and I will defend him. Before you can get at him, you shall pass over my body. O my friends, what just man would ever enter my doors, if I had suffered my habitation to be stained with the blood of an innocent man? This discourse appeased the rage of the blacks: They retired, ashamed of the design that had brought them there; and some days after, acknowledged to Murray himself, how happy they were that they had not committed a crime, which would have occasioned them perpetual remorse.

This event renders it probable, that the first impressions which the Africans receive in the New World, determine them either to good or bad actions. Repeated experience confirms the truth of this observation: those who fall to the share of an humane master, willingly espouse his interests. They insensibly adopt the spirit and manners of the place where they are fixed. This attachment is sometimes carried even to heroism. A Portuguese slave, who had fled into the woods, having learnt that his old master had been taken up for an assassination, came into the court of justice, and acknowledged himself guilty of the fact; let himself be put in prison in lieu of his master; brought false, though judicial proofs of his pretended crime, and suffered death instead of the guilty person. Actions of a less heroical nature, though not uncommon, have touched the hearts of some colonists. Several would readily say, as Sir William Gooch, governor of Virginia, when he was blamed for returning the salutation of a black: *I should be very sorry that a slave should be more polite than myself.*

But there are barbarians, who, considering pity as a weakness, are delighted with holding the rod of tyranny always over the head of their dependents. Thanks be to

to Heaven, they receive their punishment in the negligence, infidelity, desertion, and suicide, of the deplorable victims of their insatiable avarice. These wretches, especially those of Mina, are sometimes seen boldly putting an end to their lives, under the firm persuasion, that they shall, immediately after death, rise again in their own country, which they regard as the finest in the world. A vindictive spirit furnishes others with resources still more fatal. Instructed from their infancy in the arts of poisons, which grow, as it were, under their hands, they employ them in the destruction of the cattle, the horses, the mules, the companions of their slavery, and of every living thing employed in the cultivation of the lands of their oppressors. In order to remove from themselves all suspicion, they first exercise their cruelties on their wives, their children, their mistresses, and on every thing that is dearest to them. In this dreadful purpose, that can only be the result of despair, they take the double pleasure of delivering their species from a yoke more dreadful than death, and of leaving their tyrant in a wretched state of misery, nearly equal to their own. The fear of punishment does not check them. They are scarce ever known to have any kind of foresight; and they are, moreover, certain of concealing their crimes, being proof against tortures. By one of these inexplicable contradictions of the human heart, though common to all people, whether civilized or not, negroes, though naturally cowards, give many proofs of an unshaken firmness of soul. The same organization which subjects them to servitude, from the indolence of their mind, and the relaxation of their fibres, inspires them with vigour and unparalleled resolution for extraordinary actions. They are poltroons all their lifetime, and heroes for an instant. One of these wretches has been known to cut his wrist off with the stroke of an hatchet, rather than purchase his liberty, by submitting to the vile office of an executioner.

Nothing, however, can be more miserable than the condition of a black, throughout the whole American Archipelago. A narrow unwholesome hut, without any conveniencies, serves him for a dwelling. His bed

is a hurdle, fitter to put his body in pain, than to afford it any ease. Some earthen pots, and a few wooden dishes, are his furniture. The coarse linen which covers part of his body, neither secures him from the insupportable heats of the day, nor the dangerous dews of the night. The food he is supplied with, is, cassava, salt beef, cod, fruits, and roots, which are scarce able to support his miserable existence. Bereaved of every thing, he is condemned to a perpetual drudgery in a burning climate, constantly under the rod of an unfeeling master.

The condition of these slaves, though everywhere deplorable, is something different in the colonies. Those who have very extensive estates, generally give them a portion of land, to supply them with the necessaries of life. They are allowed to employ a part of the Sunday in cultivating it, and the few moments that, on other days, they spare from the time allotted for their meals. In the smaller islands, the colonist himself furnishes their food, the greatest part of which hath crossed the seas. Ignorance, avarice, or poverty, have introduced into some colonies a method of providing for the subsistence of negroes, equally destructive both to the men and the plantation. They allow them, on Saturday, or some other day, to work in the neighbouring plantations, or to plunder them, in order to procure a maintenance for the rest of the week.

Besides these differences arising from the particular situation of the settlements in the West Indies, each European nation hath a manner of treating slaves peculiar to itself. The Spaniards make them the companions of their indolence; the Portuguese, the instruments of their debaucheries; the Dutch, the victims of their avarice; the English, who easily derive their subsistence from their estates on the northern continent, are less attentive to the management of them than any other nation. If they never promote intermarriages among the blacks, they yet receive with kindness, as the gifts of Nature, those children that are the produce of less restrained connections, and seldom exact from the fathers or mothers a toil or a tribute above their strength. Slaves, by them, are considered merely as natural productions,

ductions, which ought neither to be used nor destroyed without necessity ; but they never treat them with familiarity ; they never smile upon them, nor speak to them. One would think they were afraid of letting them suspect, that Nature could have given any one mark of resemblance betwixt them and their slaves. This makes them hate the English. The French, less haughty, less disdainful, consider the Africans as a species of moral beings ; and these unhappy men, sensible of the honour of seeing themselves almost treated like rational creatures, seem to forget, that their master is impatient of making his fortune, that he always overworks them, and frequently lets them want subsistence.

The opinions of the Europeans have also some influence on the condition of the negroes of America. The protestants, who are not actuated by a desire of making proselytes, suffer them to live in Mahomedanism, or in that idolatry in which they were born, under a pretence, that it would be a wrong think to keep *brethren in Christ* in a state of slavery. The catholics think themselves obliged to give them some instruction, and to baptize them ; but their charity extends no farther than the bare ceremonies of a baptism, which is wholly useless and unnecessary to men who dread not the pains of hell, to which, as they say, they are accustomed in this life.

Every thing renders them insensible to the dread of future punishment, both the torments of their slavery, and the disorders to which they are liable in America. They are particularly subject to two diseases, the yaws, and a complaint that affects their stomach. The first effect of this last disorder is, to turn their skin and complexion to an olive colour. Their tongue becomes white, and they are oppressed with a drowsiness that they cannot resist ; they faint, and are incapable of the least exercise. It is a languor, and a total relaxation of the whole machine. In this situation, they are in such a state of despondency, that they suffer themselves to be knocked down, rather than walk. The loathing which they have of mild and wholesome food, is attended with a kind of rage for every thing that is salted or spiced. Their legs swell, their breath is obstructed, and
few

few of them survive this disorder. The greatest part die of suffocation, after having suffered and languished for several months.

The thickness of their blood, which appears to be the source of these disorders, may proceed from several causes. One of the principal, is, undoubtedly, the melancholy which must seize those men who are violently torn away from their country, are fettered like criminals, find themselves, all on a sudden, on the sea, where they continue for two months or six weeks, and who, from the midst of a beloved family, pass under the yoke of an unknown people, from whom they expect the most dreadful punishments. A species of food, new to them, and disagreeable in itself, disgusts them in their passage. At their arrival in the islands, the food that is distributed to them, is neither good, nor sufficient for their subsistence. To complete their wretchedness, several among them have contracted in Africa, the habit of eating a certain earth, which gratified their taste, without anyways incommoding them: they seek for something that resembles this; and chance hath thrown in their way a soft stone of a deep yellow, which totally spoils their stomach.

The yaws, which is the second disorder peculiar to negroes, discovers itself by blotches that are dry, hard, callous, and round, sometimes covered by the skin, but most commonly ulcerated, and sprinkled, as it were, with a whitish flower intermixed with yellow. The yaws have been confounded with the venereal disease, because the same remedy is proper for both. This opinion, though pretty general, has less to support it, than at first sight it appears to have.

All the negroes, as well male as female, who come from Guinea, or are born in the islands, have the yaws once in their lives: it is a disease they must necessarily pass through; but there is no instance of any of them being attacked with it a second time, after having been radically cured. The Europeans seldom or never catch this disorder, notwithstanding the frequent and daily connection which they have with the negro women. These women suckle the children, but do not give them the yaws. How is it possible to reconcile these facts, which

which are incontestible, with the system which physicians seem to have adopted with regard to the nature of the yaws? Why will it not be allowed, that the semen, the blood, and skin of the negroes, are susceptible of a virus peculiar to their species? The cause of this disorder, perhaps, is owing to that which occasions their colour: one difference is naturally productive of another; and there is no being or quality that exists absolutely detached from others in nature.

But, whatever this disorder may be, it is certain, from the most accurate and undeniable calculations, that there dies every year in America, the seventh part of the blacks that are imported thither from Guinea. Fourteen hundred thousand wretches, that are now in the European colonies of the New World, are the unfortunate remains of nine millions of slaves that have been conveyed thither. This dreadful destruction cannot be the effect of the climate, which is nearly the same as that of Africa, much less of the disorders, to which, in the opinion of all observers, but few fall a sacrifice. It must originate from the manner in which these slaves are governed: and might not an error of this nature be corrected?

In what manner the condition of slaves might be rendered more supportable.

THE first step necessary in this reformation would be, to attend minutely to the natural and moral state of man. Those who go to purchase blacks on the coasts of savage nations; those who convey them to America, and especially those who direct their labours, often think themselves obliged, from their situation, and frequently, too, for the sake of their own safety, to oppress these wretched men. The souls of these managers of slaves, lost to all sense of compassion, are ignorant of every motive to enforce obedience, but those of fear or severity, and these they exercise with all the harshness of a precarious authority. If the proprietors of plantations would cease to regard the care of their slaves as an occupation below them, and consider it as an office, to which it is their duty to attend, they would soon discard those errors that arise from a spirit of cruelty.

ty. The history of all mankind would show them, that, in order to render slavery useful, it must at least be made easy; that force does not prevent the rebellion of the mind; that it is the master's interest that his slave should live; that nothing is to be expected from him, the moment that he no longer fears to die.

This principle of enlightened reason, derived from the sentiments of humanity, would contribute to the reformation of several abuses. Men would acknowledge the necessity of lodging, clothing, and giving proper food to beings condemned to the most painful bondage that ever has existed since the infamous origin of slavery. They would be sensible, that it is naturally impossible, that those who reap no advantage from the sweat of their brows, can have the same understanding, the same œconomy, the same activity, the same strength, as the man who enjoys the produce of his industry. That political moderation would gradually take place, which consists in the lessening of labour, alleviating punishment, and rendering to man part of his rights, in order to reap more certainly the benefit of those offices that are imposed upon him. The preservation of a great number of slaves, whom disorders, occasioned by vexation or regret, deprive the colonies of, would be the natural consequence of so wise a regulation. Far from aggravating the yoke that oppresses them, every kind of attention should be given to make it sit easy, to dissipate even the idea of it, by favouring a natural taste that seems peculiar to the negroes.

Their organs are extremely sensible of the powers of music. Their ear is so true, that in their dances, the time of a song makes them leap up and come down, an hundred at once, striking the earth at the same instant. Enchanted, as it were, with the voice of the singer, or the tone of a stringed instrument, a vibration of the air is the spirit that actuates all the bodies of these men: A sound agitates, transports, and throws them into ecstasies. In their common labours, the motion of their arms, or of their feet, is always in cadence. At all their employments they sing, and seem always as if they were dancing. Music animates their

courage, and rouses them from their indolence. The marks of this extreme sensibility to harmony, are visible in all the muscles of their bodies, which are always naked. Poets and musicians by nature, they make the words subservient to the music, by a licence they arbitrarily assume of lengthening or shortening them, in order to accommodate them to an air that pleases them. Whenever any object or incident strikes a negro, he instantly makes it the subject of a song. In all ages, this has been the origin of Poetry. Three or four words, which are alternately repeated by the finger and the general chorus, sometimes constitute the whole poem. Five or six bars of music compose the whole length of the song. A circumstance that appears singular, is, that the same air, though merely a continual repetition of the same tones, takes entire possession of them, and makes them work or dance for hours together: Neither they, nor even the white men, are disgusted with that tedious uniformity which these repetitions might naturally occasion. This particular attachment is owing to the warmth and expression which they introduce into their songs. Their airs are generally double time. None of them tend to inspire them with pride. Those intended to excite tenderness, promote rather a kind of languor. Even those which are most lively, carry in them a certain expression of melancholy. This is the highest entertainment to minds of great sensibility.

So strong an inclination for music might become a powerful motive of action, under the direction of skilful hands. Festivals, games, and rewards, might, on this account, be established among them. These amusements, conducted with judgement, would prevent that stupidity so common among slaves, alleviate their labours, and preserve them from that constant melancholy which consumes them, and shortens their days. After having provided for the preservation of the blacks exported from Africa, the welfare of those who are born in the islands themselves would then be considered.

The negroes are not averse from the propagation of their species, even in the chains of slavery. But it is the

the cruelty of their masters which hath effectually prevented them from complying with this great end of Nature. Such hard labour is required from negro women, both before and after their pregnancy, that their children are either abortive, or live but a short time after delivery. Mothers, rendered desperate by the punishments, which the weakness of their condition occasions them, snatch sometimes their children from the cradle, in order to strangle them in their arms, and sacrifice them with fury mingled with a spirit of revenge and compassion, that they may not become the property of their cruel masters. This barbarity, the whole horror of which must be imputed to the Europeans, will, some time or other, make them sensible of their error. Their sensibility will be roused by paying a greater attention to their true interests. They will learn, that they lose more than they get, by perpetually committing such outrages against humanity; and, if they do not become the benefactors of their slaves, they will at least cease to be their executioners.

They will, perhaps, resolve to set free those mothers who shall have brought up a considerable number of children to the age of six years. The allurements of liberty are the most powerful that can influence the human heart. The negro women, animated by the hope of so great a blessing, to which all would aspire, and few would be able to attain, would make neglect and infamy be succeeded by a virtuous emulation to bring up children, whose number and preservation would secure to them freedom and tranquillity.

After having taken wise measures not to deprive their plantations of those succours arising from the extraordinary fruitfulness of the negro women; they will attend to the care of conducting and extending cultivation by means of population, and without foreign expedients. Every thing invites them to establish this easy and natural system.

There are some powers, whose settlements in the American isles, every day acquire extent; and there are none whose manual labour does not continually increase. These lands, therefore, constantly require a greater number of hands to cultivate them. Africa,

where all Europeans go to recruit the population of their colonies, gradually furnishes them with fewer men, and supplies them at the same time with worse slaves, and at a dearer rate. This source for the obtaining of slaves, will be gradually more and more exhausted. But, were this revolution in trade as chimerical, as it seems to be not far distant, it is, nevertheless, certain, that a great number of slaves, drawn out of a remote region, perish in their passage, or in the New World; and that, when they come to America, they fetch a very high price; that there are few of them whose term of life is not shortened; and that the greater part of those who attain a wretched old age, are extremely ignorant, and, being accustomed, from their infancy, to idleness, are frequently very unfit for the employments to which they are destined, and are in a continual state of despondency, on account of their being separated from their country. If we are not mistaken in our opinion, cultivators born in the American islands themselves, always breathing their native air, brought up without any other expence than what consists in a cheap food, habituated, in early life, to labour, by their own parents, endowed with a sufficient share of understanding, or a singular aptitude for all the useful arts; such cultivators must be preferable to slaves that have been sold, and live in a perpetual exile and restraint.

The method of substituting, in the place of foreign negroes, those of the colonies themselves, is very obvious. It wholly consists in superintending the black children that are born in the islands, in confining to their work-houses that multitude of slaves, who carry about with them their uselessness, their licentiousness, and the luxury and insolence of their master, in all the towns and ports of Europe; but, above all, in requiring of navigators who frequent the African coasts, that they should form their cargo of an equal number of men and women, or even of a majority of women, during some years, in order to reduce that disproportion which obtains between the two sexes.

This last precaution, by putting the pleasures of love within the reach of all the blacks, would contribute to their ease and multiplication. These unhappy men,
forgetting

forgetting the weight of their chains, would, with transport, see themselves live again in their children. The majority of them are faithful, even to death, to those negro women whom love and slavery have assigned them for their companions; they treat them with that compassion which the wretched mutually derive from one another, even in the rigour of their condition; they comfort them under the load of their employments; they sympathize, at least, with them, when, through excess of labour, or want of food, the mother can only offer her child a breast that is dry, or bathed in her tears. The women, on their part, though under no obligations to chastity, are firm in their attachments; provided that the vanity of being beloved by white people does not render them inconstant. Unhappily, this is a temptation to infidelity, to which they have too often opportunities to yield.

Those who have enquired into the causes of this taste for black women, which appears to be so depraved in the Europeans, have found it to arise from the nature of the climate, which, under the torrid zone, irresistibly excites men to the pleasures of love; the facility of gratifying this insurmountable inclination without restraint, and without the trouble of a long pursuit; from a certain captivating attraction of beauty, discoverable in black women, as soon as custom hath once reconciled the eye to their colour; but principally from a warmth of constitution, which gives them the power of inspiring and returning the most ardent transports. Thus, they revenge themselves, as it were, for the humiliating despondence of their condition, by the violent and immoderate passions which they excite in their masters; nor do our ladies, in Europe, possess, in a more exalted degree, the art of wasting and running out large fortunes, than the negro women. But the African women have the superiority over the European, in the real passion they have for the men who purchase them. The faithful attachment of these women hath frequently been the means of discovering, and preventing, conspiracies that would have destroyed all their oppressors by the hands of their slaves. The double tyranny of these un-

worthy usurpers of the estates and liberty of so many people, deserved, doubtless, such a punishment.

Slavery is entirely contrary to humanity, reason and justice.

We will not here so far demean ourselves, as to enlarge the ignominious list of those writers who devote their abilities to justify, by policy, what morality condemns. In an age where so many errors are boldly laid open, it would be unpardonable to conceal any truth that is interesting to humanity. If, whatever we have hitherto advanced, hath seemingly tended only to alleviate the burden of slavery, the reason is, that it was first necessary to give some comfort to those unhappy beings, whom we cannot set free; and convince their oppressors, that they are cruel, to the prejudice of their real interests. But, in the meantime, until some great revolution makes the evidence of this great truth felt, it is proper to go on with the subject. We shall then first prove, that there is no reason of state that can authorise slavery. We shall not be afraid to cite to the tribunal of reason and justice, those governments which tolerate this cruelty, or which even are not ashamed to make it the basis of their power.

Montesquieu could not resolve with himself to treat seriously the question concerning slavery. In reality it is degrading reason to employ it, I will not say in defending, but even in refuting, an abuse so repugnant to it. Whoever justifies so odious a system, deserves the utmost contempt from a philosopher, and from the negro a stab with his dagger.

If you touch me, said Clarissa to Lovelace, that moment I kill myself; and I would say to him who attempted to deprive me of my liberty, If you approach me, I will stab you. In this case, I should reason better than Clarissa; because, defending my liberty, or, which is the same thing, my life, is my primary duty; to regard that of another, is only a secondary consideration; and, if all other circumstances were the same, the death of a criminal is more conformable to justice than that of an innocent person.

Will

Will it be said, that he who wants to make me a slave does me no injury, but that he only makes use of his rights? Where are those rights? Who hath stamped upon them so sacred a character as to silence mine? From Nature I hold the right of self-defence; Nature, therefore, has not given to another the right of attacking me. If thou thinkest thyself authorised to oppress me, because thou art stronger and more ingenious than I am; do not complain if my vigorous arm shall plunge a dagger into thy breast; do not complain, when in thy tortured entrails thou shalt feel the pangs of death conveyed by poison into thy food: I am stronger and more ingenious than thou: fall a victim, therefore, in thy turn; and expiate the crime of having been an oppressor*.

He who supports the system of slavery, is the enemy of the whole human race. He divides it into two societies of legal assassins; the oppressors, and the oppressed. It is the same thing as proclaiming to the world, if you would preserve your life, instantly take away mine, for I want to have yours.

But the right of slavery, you say, extends only to the right of labour and the privation of liberty, not of life. What! does not the master, who disposes of my strength at his pleasure, likewise dispose of my life, which depends on the voluntary and moderate use of my faculties? What is existence to him, who has not the disposal of it? I cannot kill my slave, but I can make him bleed under the whip of an executioner; I can overwhelm him with sorrows, drudgery and want; I can injure him every way, and secretly undermine the principles and springs of his life; I can smother, by slow punishments, the wretched infant, which a negro woman carries in her womb. Thus, the laws protect the slave against a violent death, only to leave to my cruelty the right of making him die by degrees.

Let

* Ah! ye wretched apologists for slavery, little do ye think that you are filling the earth with legal assassins; that you are sapping the foundations of society, by sometimes arming one people against all the rest, and, at another time, many nations against an individual; that you are proclaiming aloud to mankind, "If you wish to save your life, make haste to take away mine, as I would yours."

Let us proceed a step farther : the right of slavery is that of perpetrating all sorts of crimes : those crimes which invade property ; for slaves are not suffered to have any, even in their own persons : those crimes which destroy personal safety ; for the slave may be sacrificed to the caprice of his master : those crimes which make modesty shudder.—My blood rises at these horrid images. I detest, I abhor the human species, made up only of victims and executioners ; and, if it is never to become better, may it be annihilated !

Farther, that I may not conceal any part of my sentiments on this subject, Cartouche, the highwayman, sitting at the foot of a tree in a deep forest, calculating the profits and losses of his robberies, the rewards and pay of his associates, and adjusting with them the ideas of proportion and distributive justice ; this Cartouche is not a very different character from that of the merchant, who, reclined on his counter, with his pen in his hand, settles the number of attacks which he can order to be made on the coasts of Guinea ; who deliberately examines how many firelocks each negro will cost him, in order to support the war which is to furnish him with slaves ; how many iron fetters to confine him on board ; how many whips to make him work ; how much each drop of blood will be worth to him with which each negro will water his plantation ; if the black woman will contribute more to his estate by the labours of her hands, or by those of bearing children ? —What think you of this parallel ?—The highwayman attacks you, and takes your money ; the trader carries off even your person. The one invades the rights of society ; the other, those of Nature. This certainly is the truth ; and if there existed a religion which authorised, which tolerated, even by its silence, such enormities ; if, moreover, occupied by idle or factious questions, it did not eternally denounce vengeance against the authors or instruments of this tyranny ; if it made it criminal for a slave to break his bonds ; if it did not expel the unjust judge who condemns the fugitive to death ; if such a religion existed, its ministers ought to be massacred under the ruins of their altars.

But

But these negroes, say they, are a race of men born for slavery; their dispositions are narrow, treacherous, and wicked; they themselves allow the superiority of our understandings, and almost acknowledge the justice of our authority.

The minds of the negroes are contracted; because slavery spoils all the springs of the soul: They are wicked; but not half so wicked as you: They are treacherous, because they are under no obligation to speak truth to their tyrants: They acknowledge the superiority of our understandings, because we have abused their ignorance: They allow the justice of our authority, because we have abused their weakness. I might as well say, that the Indians are a species of men born to be crushed to death, because there are fanatics among them, who throw themselves under the wheels of their idol's car, before the temple of Jaguer-nat*.

But these negroes, it is farther urged, were born slaves. Barbarians, will you persuade me, that a man can be the property of a sovereign, a son the property of a father, a wife the property of an husband, a domestic the property of a master, a negro the property of a planter?

But these slaves have sold themselves. Could ever a man, by compact, or by an oath, permit another to use and abuse him? If he assented to this compact, or confirmed

* But it will be said, All these negroes were slaves before they were purchased for America; the most part of them were born in slavery, and the rest plunged into it, either by the laws of war, or for fear of the punishment of death, incurred by their crimes, and changed into that of servitude.

It is you, ye avaricious and lazy planters, who maintain slavery in Africa, by purchasing these unhappy victims. It is you who kindle the flame of war, by putting a price, not on the ransom, but the property of the prisoners. Your vessels have carried thither the seed of destruction, that will not die but with the annihilation of your detestable commerce, or the extinction of that wretched race whom ye compel to kill themselves for brandy. These, say you, are criminals, who, deserving death, ought to bless the chains that exempt them from it; and I, on the other hand, tell you, that, among all the Africans you purchase, there is, perhaps, not one criminal, because, in a despotic state, there can be no crime.

confirmed it by an oath, it was in a transport of ignorance or folly ; and he is released from it, the moment that he either knows himself, or his reason returns.

But they had been taken in war. What have you to do with that ? Suffer the conqueror to make what ill use he pleases of his own victory. Why do you make yourselves his accomplices ?

But they were criminals, condemned in their own country to slavery. Who was it that condemned them ? Do you not know, that in a despotic state there is no criminal but the despot ?

The subject of a despotic prince is the same as the slave in a state repugnant to Nature. Every thing that contributes to keep a man in such a state, is an attempt against his person. Every power which fixes him to the tyranny of one man, is the power of his enemies ; and all those who are about him, are the authors or abettors of this violence. His mother, who taught him the first lessons of obedience ; his neighbour, who set him the example of it ; his superiors, who compelled him into this state ; and his equals, who led him into it by their opinion : All these are the ministers and instruments of tyranny. The tyrant can do nothing of himself ; he is only the first mover of those efforts which all his subjects exert to their own mutual oppression. He keeps them in a state of perpetual war, which renders robberies, treasons, and even assassinations lawful. Thus, like the blood which flows in his veins, all crimes originate from his heart, and return thither, as to their primary source. Caligula used to say, that he wished the whole human race had but one head, that he might have the pleasure of cutting it off. Socrates would have said, that if all crimes were heaped upon one head, that should be the one which ought to be struck off.

Let us, therefore, endeavour to make the light of reason, and the sentiments of Nature, take place of the blind ferocity of our ancestors. Let us break the bonds of so many victims to our mercenary principles, should we even be obliged to discard a commerce which is founded only on injustice, and whose object is luxury.

But

But even this is not necessary. There is no occasion to give up those conveniencies which custom hath so much endeared to us. We may draw them from our colonies, without peopling them with slaves. These productions may be cultivated by the hands of free men, and then be reaped without remorse.

The islands are filled with blacks, whose fetters have been broken. They successfully clear the small plantations that have been given them, or which they have acquired by their industry. Such of these unhappy men, as should recover their independence, would live in quiet upon the same manual labours, that would then be free and advantageous to them. The vassals of Denmark, who have lately been made free, have not abandoned their ploughs.

Is it then apprehended, that the facility of acquiring subsistence without labour, on a soil naturally fertile, and of dispensing with the want of clothes under a burning sky, would plunge these men in idleness? Why then do not the inhabitants of Europe confine themselves to such labours as are of the first necessity? Why do they exhaust their powers in laborious employments, which tend only to the transient gratifications of a frivolous imagination? There are amongst us a thousand professions, some more laborious than others, which owe their origin to our institutions. Human laws have given rise to a variety of fictitious wants, which otherwise would never have had an existence. By disposing of every species of property according to their capricious institutions, they have subjected an infinite number of people to the imperious will of their fellow-creatures, so far as even to make them sing and dance for a living. We have amongst us beings, formed like ourselves, who have consented to inter themselves under mountains, to furnish us with metals and with copper, perhaps to poison us: Why do we imagine that the negroes are less dupes and less foolish than the Europeans?

At the time that we gradually confer liberty on these unhappy beings as a reward for their œconomy, their good behaviour, and their industry, we must be careful to subject them to our laws and manners, and to offer them

our

our superfluities. We must give to them a country, give them interests to study, productions to cultivate, and an object adequate to their respective tastes, and our colonies will never want men, who, being eased of their chains, will be more active and robust.

To what tribunal shall we refer the cause of humanity, which so many men are in confederacy to betray, in order to overturn the whole system of slavery, which is supported by passions so universal, by laws so authentic, by the emulation of such powerful nations, and by prejudices still more powerful? Sovereigns of the earth, you alone can bring about this revolution. If you do not sport with the rest of mortals, if you do not regard the power of kings as the right of a successful plunder, and the obedience of subjects as artfully obtained from their ignorance, reflect on your own obligations. Refuse the sanction of your authority to the infamous and criminal traffic of men, turned into so many herds of cattle, and this trade will cease. For once unite, for the happiness of the world, those powers and designs which have been so often exerted for its ruin. If some one amongst you would venture to found the expectation of his opulence and grandeur on the generosity of all the rest, he instantly becomes an enemy of mankind, who ought to be destroyed. You may carry fire and sword into his territories. Your armies will soon be inspired with the sacred enthusiasm of humanity. You will then perceive what difference virtue makes between men who succour the oppressed, and mercenaries who serve tyrants.

But, what am I saying? Let the ineffectual calls of humanity be no longer pleaded with the people and their masters; perhaps, they have never been consulted in any public transactions. If then, ye nations of Europe, interest alone can exert its influence over you, listen to me once more: Your slaves stand in no need either of your generosity or of your counsels, in order to break the sacrilegious yoke which oppresses them. Nature speaks a more powerful language than philosophy, or interest. Some white people, already massacred, have expiated a part of our crimes; already have two colonies of fugitive negroes been established, to whom treaties and
power

power give a perfect security from your attempts. Poison hath at different times been the instrument of their vengeance. Several have eluded your oppression by a voluntary death. These enterprizes are so many indications of the impending storm; and the negroes only want a chief, sufficiently courageous, to lead them on to vengeance and slaughter*.

Where is this great man to be found, whom Nature, perhaps, owes to the honour of the human species? Where is this new Spartacus, who will not find a Crassus? Then will the *black code* be no more; and the *white code* will be dreadful, if the conqueror only regards the right of reprisals.

Till this revolution takes place, the negroes will groan under the yoke of oppression, the description of which cannot but interest us more and more in their destiny.

The soil of the American islands hath little resemblance to ours. Their productions are very different, as well as the manner of cultivating them. Except some pot-herbs, nothing is sown there; every thing is planted.

Labours of slaves.

Tobacco being the first production that was cultivated, as its roots do not strike deep, and the least injury destroys them, a simple harrow was only employed to prepare the lands which were to receive it, and to extirpate the noxious weeds which would have choked it. This custom still prevails.

When a more troublesome and delicate cultivation was introduced, the hoe was made use of, both for digging and weeding; but it was not employed over the whole extent of ground that was necessary. It was thought sufficient to dig a hole for the reception of the plant.

The inequality of the ground, most commonly full of hillocks, probably gave rise to this custom. It might be apprehended, that the rains, which always fall in torrents, should destroy, by the cavities they make, the

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land

* But, while the feeling mind can only put up prayers for a revolution that would do more honour to our age, than new discoveries on the globe, or in the arts and sciences, the negroes are groaning under the yoke of labour, the very description of which cannot but interest us more and more in their fate.

land that had been turned up. Indolence, and the want of means at the time of the first settlements, extended this practice to the most level plains, and custom gave a sanction to it, which no one ever thought of deviating from. At last, some planters, who were adventurous enough to discard former prejudices, thought of using the plough; and it is probable, that this method will become general wherever it shall be found practicable. It has every circumstance in its favour, that can make it desirable.

All the lands in the islands were virgin lands, when the Europeans undertook to clear them. The first that were occupied, have for a long time yielded less produce than they did in the beginning. Those which have been successively cleared, are likewise more or less exhausted, in proportion to the period of their first cultivation. Whatever their fertility at first might have been, they all lose it in process of time, and they will soon cease to requite the labours of those who cultivate them, if art is not exerted to assist nature.

It is a principle of agriculture generally admitted by naturalists, that the earth becomes fertile only in proportion as it can receive the influence of the air, and of all those meteors which are directed by this powerful agent, such as fogs, dews, and rains. Nothing but continual labour can procure this advantage to it; the islands in particular constantly require it. The wet season must be chosen for turning up the ground, the dryness of which would be an impediment to fertility. Ploughing cannot be attended with any inconvenience in lands that are level. One might prevent the danger of having shelving grounds destroyed by storms, by making furrows transversely on a line, that should cross that of the slope of the hillocks. If the declivity were so rapid that the cultivated grounds could be carried away, notwithstanding the furrows, small drains, something deeper, might be added, for the same purpose, at particular distances, which would partly break the force and velocity that the steepness of the hills adds to the fall of heavy rains.

The utility of the plough would not be merely limited to the producing a greater portion of the vegetable juice

juice in plants; it would make their produce the more certain. The islands are the regions of insects; their multiplication there, is favoured by a constant heat, and one race succeeds another, without interruption. The extensive ravages they make, are well known. Frequent and successive ploughing would check the progress of this devouring race, disturb their reproduction, would kill great numbers of them, and destroy the greatest part of their eggs. Perhaps this expedient would not be sufficient against the rats which ships have brought from Europe into America, where they have multiplied to that degree, that they often destroy one third of the crops. The industry of slaves might also be made use of, and their vigilance might be encouraged by some gratification.

The use of the plough would probably introduce the custom of manuring; it is already known in the greatest part of the coast. The manure there in use is called varech, a kind of sea plant, which, when ripe, is detached from the water, and driven on the strand by the motion of the waves: It is productive of great fertility, but, if employed without previous preparation, it communicates to the sugar a disagreeable bitterness, which must arise from the salts, that are impregnated with oily particles abounding in sea plants. Perhaps, in order to take off this bitter taste, it would only be necessary to burn the plant, and make use of the ashes. The salts being by this operation detached from the oily particles, and triturated by vegetation, would circulate more freely in the sugar-cane, and impart to it purer juices.

The interior parts of this country have not till lately been dunged. Necessity will make this practice become more general; and, in time, the soil of America will be assisted by the same methods of cultivation as the soil of Europe; but with more difficulty. In the islands where herds of cattle are not so numerous, and where there is seldom the convenience of stables, it is necessary to have recourse to other kinds of manure, and multiply them as much as possible, in order to compensate the quality by the quantity. The greatest resource will always be found in the weeds, from which useful plants must be constantly freed. These must be collected together in

heaps, and left to putrify. The colonists who cultivate coffee, have set the example of this practice; but with that degree of indolence which the heat of the climate occasions in all manual labour. A pile of weeds is heaped up at the bottom of the coffee-trees, without regarding whether these weeds, which they do not even take the trouble of covering with earth, heat the tree, and harbour the insects that prey upon it. They have been equally negligent in the management of their cattle.

The Spaniards imported all the domestic quadrupeds of Europe into America; and the colonies of other nations have been supplied with them from their settlements. Excepting hogs, which are found to thrive best in countries abounding with aquatic productions, insects and reptiles, and are become larger and better tasted, all these animals have degenerated, and the few that remain in the islands are very small. Though the badness of the climate may contribute something to this degeneracy, the want of care is, perhaps, the principal cause. They always ly in the open field. They never have either bran or oats given them, and are at grass the whole year. The colonists have not even the attention of dividing the meadows into separate portions, in order to make their cattle pass from one into the other. They always feed on the same spot, without allowing the grass time to spring up again. Such pastures can only produce weak and watery juices. Too quick a vegetation prevents them from being properly ripened. Hence the animals, destined for the food of man, afford only flesh that is tough and flabby.

Those animals, which are reserved for labour, do but very little service. The oxen draw but light loads, and that not all day long. They are always four in number. They are not yoked by the head, but by the neck, after the Spanish custom. They are not stimulated by the goad, but driven by a whip; and are directed by two drivers.

When the roads do not allow the use of carriages, mules are used instead of oxen. These are saddled after a simpler method than in Europe, but much inferior to it in strength. A mat is fixed on their back, to which two hooks are suspended on each side, the first that they

they meet with in the woods. Thus equipped, they can carry but half of what ours are able to carry, and do not go over half the ground.

The pace of their horses is not so slow: They have preserved something of the fleetness, fire, and docility of those of Andalusia, from which they derived their pedigree; but their strength is not answerable to their spirit. It is necessary to breed a great number of them, in order to obtain that service from them which might be had from a smaller number in Europe. Three or four of them must be harnessed to very light carriages used by indolent people for making excursions, which they call journies, but which with us would only be an airing.

The degeneracy of the animals in the islands might have been prevented, retarded, or diminished, if care had been taken to renew them by a foreign race. Stallions brought from colder or warmer countries, would in some degree have corrected the influence of the climate, food, and rearing. With the mares of the country they would have produced a new race far superior, as they would have come from a climate different from that into which they were imported.

It is very extraordinary, that so simple an idea should never have occurred to any of the planters; and that there has been no legislature attentive enough to its interests, to substitute in its settlements the bison to the common ox. Every body that is acquainted with this animal, must recollect that the bison has a softer and brighter skin, a disposition less dull and stupid than our bullock, and a quickness and docility far superior. It is swift in running, and, when mounted, can supply the place of a horse. It thrives as well in southern countries, as the ox that we employ loves the cold or temperate zones. This species is only known in the eastern islands, and in the greater part of Africa. If custom had less influence than it commonly has, even over the wisest governments, they would have been sensible, that this useful animal was singularly well adapted to the great Archipelago of America, and that it would be very easy to export it at a very small expence from the Gold Coast, or the Coast of Angola.

Two rich planters, one in Barbadoes, the other in St. Domingo, equally struck with the weakness of those animals, which, according to established custom, were employed in drawing and carrying, endeavoured to substitute the camel to them. This experiment, formerly tried without success in Peru by the Spaniards, did not succeed better here, nor was it possible it should. It is well known, that the camel, though a native of hot countries, dreads excessive heat, and can as little thrive or propagate under the burning sky of the torrid zone, as in the temperate ones. It would have been better to have tried the buffalo.

The buffalo is a very dirty animal, and of a fierce disposition. Its caprices are sudden and frequent. Its skin is firm, light, and almost impenetrable, and its horn serviceable for many purposes. Its flesh is black and hard, and disagreeable to the taste and smell. The milk of the female is not so sweet, but much more copious than that of the cow. Reared like the ox, with which it has a striking resemblance, it greatly surpasses it in strength and swiftness. Two buffaloes, yoked to a waggon by means of a ring passed through their nose, will draw as much as four of the stoutest bullocks, and in less than half the time. They owe this double superiority to the advantage of having longer legs, and a more considerable bulk of body, the whole power of which is employed in drawing, because they naturally carry their neck and head low. As this animal is originally a native of the torrid zone, and is larger, stronger, and more manageable in proportion to the heat of the country it is in, it cannot ever have been doubted that it would be of great service in the Caribbees, and propagate easily there. This is highly probable, especially since the successful experiments that have been made of it at Guiana.

Indolence, and old established customs, which have hindered the propagation of domestic animals, have not less impeded the success of transplanting vegetables. Several kinds of fruit-trees have been successively carried to the islands. Those that have not died, are some wild stocks, whose fruit is neither beautiful nor good. The greatest part have degenerated very fast, because
they

they have been exposed to a very strong vegetation, ever lively, and constantly quickened by the copious dews of the night, and the strong heats of the day, which are the two grand principles of fertility. Perhaps, an intelligent observer would have known how to profit from these circumstances, and have been able to raise tolerable fruit; but such men are not found in the colonies. If our kitchen herbs have succeeded better; if they are always springing again, always green and mature; the reason is, that they have not to struggle against the climate, where they experienced a moist and clammy earth, which is proper for them; and because they required no trouble. The labour of the slaves is employed in the cultivation of more useful productions.

The principal labours of these unhappy men, are directed towards those objects that are indispensable to the preservation of their wretched existence. Except in the islands that are occupied by the Spaniards, where things are very nearly in the same state as they were at the arrival of the Europeans in the New World, those productions, which were sufficient for the savages, have diminished in proportion as they have destroyed the forests, in order to form plantations. It was necessary to procure other subsistences; and the principal which ought to have been sought for, have been drawn from the country itself of the new-comers.

Africa has furnished the islands with a shrub, which grows to the height of four feet, lives four years, and is useful throughout its whole duration. It bears husks which contain five or six grains of a species of a very wholesome and very nourishing pea. Every part belonging to this shrub, is remarkable for some particular virtue. Its blossom is good for a cough; its leaves, when boiled, are applied to wounds, and of the ashes of this plant is made a lixivium, which cleanses ulcers, and dissipates the external inflammations of the skin. This shrub is called the Angola pea. It flourishes equally in lands naturally barren, and in those whose salts have been exhausted. For this reason, the best managers amongst the colonists never fail to sow it on all those

those parts of their estates, which, in other hands, would remain uncultivated.

The most valuable present, however, which the islands have received from Africa, is the manioc *. Most historians have considered this plant as a native of America. It does not appear on what foundation this opinion is supported, though pretty generally received. But, were the truth of it demonstrated, the Caribbees would stand indebted for the manioc to the Europeans, who imported it thither, along with the Africans, who fed upon it. Before our invasions, the intercourse between the continent of America and these isles was so trifling, that a production of the Terra Firma might be unknown in the Archipelago of the Antilles. It is certain, however, that the savages, who offered our first navigators bananas, yams, and potatoes, offered them no manioc; that the Caribbees, in the centre between Dominica and St. Vincent, had it from us; that the character of the savages did not render them fit to conduct so nice a culture; that it requires very open fields; and in the forests with which these islands were overgrown, there were no clear and unincumbered spaces of ground above five and twenty toises square. In short, it is beyond a doubt, that the use of it was not known till after the arrival of the negroes, and that, from time immemorial, it hath constituted the principal food of a great part of Africa.

However this may be, the manioc is a plant which is propagated by slips. It is set in furrows that are five or six inches deep, and filled with the same earth that has been digged out. These furrows are at the distance of two feet, or two feet and an half from each other, according to the nature of the ground. The shrub rises a little above six feet, and its trunk is about the thickness of the arm. In proportion as it grows, the lower leaves fall off, and only a few remain towards the top; its wood is tender and brittle.

This is a delicate plant; the cultivation of it troublesome; and the vicinity of all sorts of grass is prejudicial to it. It requires a dry and light soil; its fruit is at its root, and if this root is in the least shaken by the motion

* This plant is also called *manibot*, *cassava*, and *yucca*. T.

motion the wind communicates to the body of the plant, the fruit is formed but imperfectly. It takes eighteen months before it grows to maturity.

It is not rendered fit for human food till after it has undergone a tedious preparation. Its first skin must be scraped; it must be washed, rasped, and pressed, to extract the aqueous parts, which are a slow poison; against which, there is no remedy known. The preparation causes every noxious particle it might still contain, totally to evaporate. When there appears no more steam, it is taken off the iron plate, on which it was prepared, and suffered to cool. Repeated experiments have shown, that it was almost as dangerous to eat it hot as to eat it raw.

Its root grated, and reduced into little grains by boiling, is called flour of manioc. The paste of manioc is called cassava, which hath been converted into a cake, by boiling it without stirring. It would be dangerous to eat as much cassava as flour of manioc, because the former is less boiled. Both keep a long time, and are very nourishing, but a little difficult of digestion. Though they seem at first insipid, there are a great number of white people, who have been born in these islands, who prefer them to the best wheat. All the Spaniards in general, use it constantly, and the French feed their slaves with it.

The other European nations, who have settlements in the islands, are little acquainted with the manioc. It is from North America that these colonies receive their subsistence; so that, if, by any accident, which may very possibly take place, their connections with this fertile country were interrupted but for four months, they would be starved. A boundless avidity makes the insular colonists insensible of this imminent danger. All, at least the greater part, find their advantage in turning the whole industry of their slaves towards those productions which are the objects of commerce. The principal of these are, cocoa, rocou, cotton, indigo, and coffee. We shall elsewhere speak of their cultivation, value, and destination. We shall at present confine ourselves to the cultivation of sugar, whose produce alone

lone is more important than that of all the other commodities.

The cane that yields the sugar, is a kind of reed, which commonly rises eight or nine feet, taking in the leaves growing out of the top of it. Its most ordinary thickness is from two to four inches. It is covered with a hardish rind, which incloses a spongy substance. It is intersected at intervals with joints, that serve as it were to strengthen and support it; but without impeding the circulation of the sap, because these joints are soft and pithy in the inside.

This plant hath been cultivated, from the earliest antiquity, in some countries of Asia and Africa. About the middle of the twelfth century, it became known in Sicily, from whence it passed into the southern provinces of Spain. It was afterwards transplanted into Madeira and the Canaries. From these islands it was brought into the New World, where it throve as happily as if it had been a native of it.

All soils are not equally proper for it. Such as are rich and strong, low and marshy, environed with woods, or lately cleared, however large and tall the canes may be, produce only a juice that is aqueous, insipid, of a bad quality, difficult to be boiled, purified, and preserved. Canes planted in a ground where they soon meet with soft stone or rock, have but a very short duration, and yield but little sugar. A light, porous, and deep soil, is by nature most favourable to canes.

The general method of cultivating it, is to prepare a large field; to make, at the distance of three feet from one another, furrows eighteen inches long, twelve broad, and six deep; to lay in these, two, and sometimes three, slips of about a foot each, taken from the upper part of the cane, and to cover them lightly with earth. From each of the joints in the slips issues a stem, which, in time, becomes a sugar-cane.

Great care should be taken to clear it constantly from the weeds, which never fail to grow around it, for the first six months. The canes then are sufficiently thick and near one another to destroy every thing that might be prejudicial to their fertility. They are commonly
suffered

suffered to grow eighteen months, and are seldom cut at any other time.

From the stock of these, issue suckers, which are, in their turn, cut fifteen months after. This second cutting yields only half of the produce of the first. The planters sometimes make a third cutting, and even a fourth, which are always successively less, however good the soil may be. Nothing, therefore, but want of hands for planting afresh, can oblige a planter to expect more than two crops from his cane.

These crops are not made in all the colonies at the same time. In the Danish, Spanish, and Dutch settlements, they begin in January, and continue till October. This method does not imply any fixed season for the maturity of the sugar-cane. This plant, however, like others, must have its progress; and it has been generally observed to be in flower in the months of November and December. It must necessarily follow, from the custom these nations have adopted, of continuing to gather their crops ten months without intermission, that they cut some canes which are not ripe enough, and others that are too ripe, and then the fruit has not the requisite qualities. This harvest should have a fixed season; and probably, the months of March and April are the fittest for it: nor do they prefer this time because they are then riper; but the drought which prevails in their islands, renders the rains, which fall in September, necessary to their planting; and as the canes are eighteen months in growing, this period always brings them to the precise point of maturity.

In order to extract the juice of the cut canes, which ought to be done in four and twenty hours, otherwise it would turn sour, they pass them between two cylinders of iron, or copper, placed perpendicularly on an immoveable table. The motion of the cylinders is regulated by an horizontal wheel turned by oxen, or horses; but, in water-mills, this horizontal wheel derives its movement from a perpendicular one, whose circumference meeting a current of water, receives an impression which turns it upon its axis: this motion is from right to left, if the current of water strikes the upper

upper part of the wheel; from left to right, if the current strikes the lower part.

From the reservoir, where the juice of the cane is received, it falls into a boiler where those particles of water are made to evaporate that are most easily separated. This liquor is poured into another boiler, where a moderate fire makes it throw up its first scum. When it hath lost its clammy consistence it is made to run into a third boiler, where it throws up much more scum, by means of an increased degree of heat. It then receives the last boiling in a fourth caldron, whose fire is three times stronger than the first.

This last fire decides the fate of the process. If it hath been well managed, the sugar forms chrystals that are larger or smaller, more or less bright, in proportion to the greater or less quantity of oil they abound with. If the fire hath been too violent, the substance is reduced to a black and charcoal extract, which cannot produce any more essential salt. If the fire hath been too moderate, there remains a considerable quantity of extraneous oils, which colour the sugar, and render it thick and blackish; so that, when it is to be dried, it becomes always porous, because the spaces, which these oils filled up, remain empty.

As soon as the sugar is cool, it is poured into earthen vessels of a conic figure, the base of the cone is open, its top has a hole, through which the water is poured that has not formed any chrystals. This is called the syrup. After this water hath flowed through, the raw sugar remains, which is rich, brown and soft.

The greatest part of the islands leave to Europe the care of giving sugar the other preparations which are necessary to make it fit for use. This practice spares the expence of large buildings, leaves them more blacks to employ in agriculture, allows them to make their cultures without any interruption for two or three months together, and employs a greater number of ships for exportation.

The French planters alone have thought it their interest to manage their sugars in a different manner. To whatever degree of exactness the juice of the sugar-cane may be boiled, there always remains an infinite

finite

finite number of particles foreign to the salts of the sugar, to which they appear to be what lees are to wine. These give it a dead colour, and the taste of tartar, of which they endeavour to deprive it, by an operation called earthing. This consists in putting again the raw sugars into a new earthen vessel, in every respect similar to that we have mentioned. The surface of the sugar, throughout the whole extent of the basis of the cone, is then covered with a white marle, on which they pour water. In filtering it through this marle, the water carries with it a portion of a calcareous earth, which it spreads upon the different saline particles, where this earth meets with oily substances, to which it unites. This water is afterwards drained off through the opening at the top of the mould, and a second syrup is procured, which they call melasses, and which is so much the worse, in proportion as the sugar was finer, that is, contained less extraneous oil: for then the calcareous earth, dissolved by the water, passes alone, and carries with it all its acrimony.

This earthing is followed by the last preparation, which is effected by fire, and serves for the evaporating of the moisture with which the salts are impregnated, during the process of earthing. In order to obtain this, the sugar is taken out of the conical vessel of the earth, in its whole form, and conveyed into a stove, which receives from an iron furnace a gentle and gradual heat, where it is left till the sugar is become very dry, which commonly happens at the end of two or three weeks.

Though the expence which this process requires, is in general thrown away, since the earthed sugar is commonly refined in Europe, in the same manner as the raw sugar; all the inhabitants of the French islands, however, who are able to purify their sugars in this manner, generally take this trouble. This method is extremely advantageous to a nation whose marine is weak, as it enables them, in times of war, to convey into their own metropolis the most valuable cargoes, with a less number of ships than if they prepared only raw sugars.

One may judge from these species of sugars, but much better from that which has undergone the earthing, of what sort of salts it is composed. If the soil, where the cane hath been planted, is hard, stony, and sloping, the salts will be white, angular, and the grain very large. If the soil is marly, the colour will be the same; but the granulations, being cut on fewer sides, will reflect less light. If the soil is rich and spongy, the granulations will be nearly spherical, the colour will be dusky, the sugar will slip under the finger, without any unequal feel. This last sugar is considered as the worst.

Whatever may be the reason, those places that have a northern aspect produce the best sugar; and marly grounds yield the greatest quantity. The preparations which the sugar that grows in these kinds of soil require, are less tedious and troublesome than those which the sugar requires that is produced in a rich land. But these observations admit of infinite variety, the investigation of which is properly the province of chymists, or speculative planters*.

Besides sugar, the cane furnishes syrup, whose value is only a twelfth of that of the price of sugars. The best syrup is that which runs from the first vessel into the second, when the raw sugar is made. It is composed of the grosser particles, which carry along with them the salts of sugar, whether it contains or separates them in its passage. The syrup of an inferior kind, which is more bitter, and less in quantity, is formed by the water which carries off the tartareous and earthy particles of the sugar when it is washed. By means of fire, some sugar is besides extracted from the first syrup, which, after this operation, is of less value than the second.

Both these kinds are carried into the north of Europe, where the people use them instead of butter and sugar. In North America they make the same use of them, where they are farther employed to give fermentation,

* Whatever may be the quality of the sugar, it is pounded in America before it is shipped for Europe; and, when it is put up in casks, the utmost attention is given to separate the different kinds from each other.

tation, and an agreeable taste to a liquor called *Prusi*, which is only an infusion of the bark of a tree.

This syrup is still more useful, by the secret that has been discovered, of converting it, by distillation, into a spiritous liquor, which the English call *Rum*, and the French *Taffia*. This process, which is very simple, is made by mixing a third part of syrup with two thirds of water. When these two substances have sufficiently fermented, which commonly happens at the end of twelve or fifteen days, they are put into a clean still, where the distillation is made as usual. The liquor that is drawn off, is equal to the quantity of the syrup employed.

Such is the method, which, after many experiments and variations, all the islands have generally pursued in the cultivation of sugar. It is, undoubtedly, a good one; but, perhaps, it hath not acquired that degree of perfection of which it is susceptible. One may be allowed to conjecture, that if, instead of planting canes in large fields, they parcelled out the ground into divisions of sixty feet, leaving betwixt two planted divisions a space of land uncultivated, such a method would be attended with great advantages. In the modern practice, none but the canes on the borders are of a fine growth, and attain to a proper degree of maturity. Those in the middle of the field, in part miscarry, and ripen badly, because they are deprived of a current of air, which only acts by its weight, and seldom gets to the foot of these canes, that are always covered with the leaves.

In this new system of plantation, those portions of land which had not been cultivated, would be most favourable for reproduction, when the crops of the planted divisions had been made, which, in their turn, would be left to recover. It is probable, that, by this method, as much sugar might be obtained, as by the present practice; with this additional advantage, that it would require fewer slaves to improve it. One may judge what the cultivation of sugar would then produce, by what it now yields, notwithstanding its imperfections.

On a plantation fixed on a good ground, and sufficiently stocked with blacks, with cattle, and all other necessaries, two men will cultivate a square of canes, that is, an hundred geometrical paces. This square must yield, on an average, sixty quintals of raw sugar. The common price of a quintal in Europe, after deducting all the expences, will be 20 livres (*a*). This makes an income of 600 livres (*b*), for the labour of each man. 150 livres (*c*), to which must be added the price of syrup and rum, will defray the expences of cultivation, that is to say, for the maintenance of slaves, for their loss, their disorders, their clothes, and repairing their utensils, and other accidents. The net produce of an acre and half of land will then be 450 livres (*d*). It would be difficult to find a culture productive of greater emoluments.

It may be objected, that this is stating the produce below its real value, because a square of canes does not employ two men. But those who would advance this objection, ought to observe, that the making of sugar requires other labours than those of merely cultivating it, and, consequently, workmen employed elsewhere than in the fields. The estimate and compensation of these different kinds of service, oblige us to deduct from the produce of a square of plantation, the expence of maintaining two men.

It is principally with their sugar that the islands furnish their planters with all the articles of convenience and luxury. They draw from Europe flour, liquors, salt provisions, silks, linens, hardware; and every thing that is required for apparel, food, furniture, ornament, conveniencies, and even their luxuries. Their consumptions of every kind are prodigious, and must necessarily influence the manners of the inhabitants, the greatest part of whom are rich, and can well afford them.

It should seem that the Europeans, who have been transplanted into the American islands, must no less have degenerated than the animals which they carried with them. The climate acts

*Character of
the Europeans
settled in
the islands.*

on

(*a*) 17 s. 6 d. (*b*) 26 l. 3 s. (*c*) 6 l. 11 s. 3 d. (*d*) 19 l. 13 s. 9 d.

on all living beings ; but men, being less immediately subject to the laws of Nature, resist her influence the more, because they are the only beings who act for themselves. The first colonists who settled in the Antilles, corrected the action of a new sky, and a new soil, by the conveniencies which it was in their power to derive from a commerce that was always open with their former country. They learned to lodge and maintain themselves, in a manner the best adapted to the change of their situation. They retained the customs of their education, and every thing that could agree with the natural laws of the air they breathed. With these they carried into America the food and usages of Europe, and familiarized to each other, beings and productions which Nature had separated by an interval of the same extent as a zone. But, of all their primitive customs, the most salutary, perhaps, was that of mingling and dividing the two races by intermarriages.

All nations, even the least civilized, have proscribed an union of sexes between the children of the same family ; whether it was, that experience or prejudice dictated this law, or chance naturally led them to it. Beings, brought up together in infancy, accustomed to see one another continually, in this mutual familiarity, rather contract that indifference which arises from habit, than that lively and impetuous sensation of sympathy, which suddenly affects two beings, who never saw one another. If, in the savage life, hunger disunites families, love undoubtedly must have reunited them. The history, whether true or fabulous, of the rape of the Sabine women, demonstrates that marriage was the first alliance of nations. Thus, the blood will be more intermixed by the casual meetings occasioned by a wandering life, or by the conventions and agreements of settled communities. The natural advantage of crossing the breed among men as well as animals, in order to preserve the species from degenerating, is the result of slow experience, and is posterior to the acknowledged utility of uniting families, in order to cement the peace of society. Tyrants very early understood how far it was proper for them to separate, or connect their subjects, in order to keep them in a state of dependence. They formed men into separate ranks

by their prejudices ; because this line of division between them became a bond of submission to the sovereign, who balanced them together by their mutual hatred and opposition. They connected families to each other in every station ; because this union totally extinguished every spark of dissension repugnant to the spirit of civil society. Thus, the intermixture of pedigrees and families by marriage, has been rather the result of political institutions, than formed upon the views of Nature.

But, whatever be the natural principal and moral tendency of this custom, it was observed by the Europeans, who were willing to multiply in the islands. The greatest part of them married, either in their own country, before they removed into the New World, or with those who landed there. The European married a Creole, or the Creole an European, whom chance or family connections brought into America. From this happy association hath been formed a peculiar character, which, in the two worlds, distinguishes the man born under the sky of the New, but from parents that are the issue of either. The marks of this character will be pointed out with so much the more certainty, as they are drawn from the writings of an accurate observer, from which we have already taken some particulars respecting natural history.

The Creoles are in general well made. One can hardly see a single person afflicted with those deformities which are so common in other climates. They have all an extreme suppleness in their limbs ; whether it is to be attributed to a particular organization adapted to hot countries, or to the custom of their being reared without the confinement of swaddling cloaths, and stays, or to the exercise they are habituated to from their infancy. Their complexion, however, never has that air of vivacity and freshness, which contributes more to beauty than regular features do. Their colour, when they are in health, resembles that of persons just recovering from a fit of illness ; but this livid complexion, more or less dark, is nearly that of our southern people.

Their intrepidity in war has been signalized by a series of bold actions. There would be no better soldiers, if they were more capable of being disciplined.

History

History does not afford any of those instances of cowardice, treachery and meanness among them, which sully the annals of all nations. It can hardly be alleged, that a Creole ever did a mean action.

All strangers, without exception, find in the islands, the most friendly and generous hospitality. This useful virtue is practised with an ostentation, which shows, at least, the honour they attach to it. Their natural propensity to beneficence, banishes avarice; and the Creoles are generous in their dealings.

They are strangers to dissimulation, craft, and suspicion. The pride they take in their frankness, the opinion they have of themselves, together with their extreme vivacity, exclude from their commercial transactions, all that mystery and reserve, which stifles natural goodness of disposition, extinguishes the social spirit, and blunts our sensibility.

They are independent and inconstant in their taste, on account of their warm imagination, which is incapable of any restraint. It constantly hurries them with fresh ardour into pleasures, to which they sacrifice both their fortune, and their whole existence.

A remarkable degree of penetration, a quick facility in seizing all ideas, and expressing themselves with vivacity; the power of combining, added to the talent of observing; a happy mixture of all the qualities of mind and character, which render men capable of the greatest actions, will make them attempt every thing, when oppression compels them to it.

The sharp and saline air of the Caribbees deprives the women of that lively colour which is the beauty of their sex. But they have a delicate, white complexion, which allows the eyes all their power, and conveys into the soul such deep impressions, as are irresistible. As they are extremely sober, they drink nothing but chocolate, coffee, and such spiritous liquors, as restore to the organs their tone and vigour, enervated by the climate; while the men are continually drinking in proportion to the heat that exhausts them.

They are very prolific, and often mothers of ten or twelve children. This propagation proceeds from love, which strongly attaches them to the man they possess;

but

but which also throws them instantly into the arms of another, whenever death has dissolved the union of a first or second marriage.

Jealous even to distraction, they are seldom unfaithful. That indolence, which makes them neglect the means of pleasing, the degrading taste which the men have for negro women, their manner of life, private or publick, which precludes the opportunities or temptations to gallantry; these are the best supports of the virtue of these females.

The solitary manner in which they live in their houses, gives them an air of timidity, which embarrasses them in their intercourse with the world. They lose, even in early life, the spirit of emulation and choice, and this prevents them from cultivating the agreeable talents of education. They seem to have neither power nor taste for any thing but dancing, which, undoubtedly, transports and animates them to higher pleasures. This instinct of pleasure attends them through all the stages of life; whether it is, that they still retain some share of their youthful sensibility, or are stimulated with the recollection of it; or from other reasons which are unknown to us.

From this constitution arises such an extremely sensible and sympathizing character, that they cannot even bear the sight of misery; though they are, at the same time, rigid and severe, with respect to the service they require of those domestics that are attached to their person. More despotic and inexorable towards their slaves than the men themselves; they feel no remorse in ordering chastisements, the severity of which would be a punishment and a lesson to them, if they were obliged to inflict them themselves, or were witnesses to them.

This slavery of the negroes is, perhaps, the cause from whence the Creoles, in part, derive a certain character, which makes them appear strange, fantastic, and which renders their conversation not much relished in Europe. From their earliest infancy, they are accustomed to see a number of tall and stout men about them, whose business it is to conjecture and anticipate their wishes. This first view must immediately inspire them with the most extravagant opinion of themselves.

Seldom

Seldom meeting with any opposition to their caprice, though ever so unreasonable, they assume a spirit of presumption, tyranny, and disdain, for a great part of mankind. Nothing is more insolent than the man who always lives with his inferiors; but, when these happen to be slaves, habituated to wait upon children, to dread even their cries, which must expose them to punishment; What must masters become, who have never obeyed; wicked men who have never been punished; and madmen who are used to put their fellow-creatures in irons?

So cruel an example of dependence, gives the Americans that pride which must necessarily be detested in Europe, where a greater equality among men teaches them a greater mutual respect. Educated without knowing either pain or labour, they are neither able to surmount a difficulty, or bear contradiction. Nature hath given them every advantage, and fortune refused them nothing. In this respect, like most kings, they are unhappy, because they have never experienced adversity. If the climate did not strongly excite them to love, they would not taste a single true pleasure; And yet they have seldom the happiness of forming an idea of those passions, which, thwarted by obstacles and refusals, are fed with tears, and gratified with virtue. If they were not confined by the laws of Europe, which govern them by their wants, and repress or restrain the extraordinary degree of independence they enjoy, they would fall into a softness and effeminacy which would render them sooner or later the victims of their own tyranny, or would sink them into a state of anarchy that would overturn all the foundations of their community.

But if they once ceased to have negroes for slaves, and kings who live at a distance from them for masters, they, perhaps, would become the most astonishing people that ever appeared on the earth. The spirit of liberty which they would imbibe from their earliest infancy; the understanding and abilities which they would inherit from Europe; the activity, which the necessity of repelling numerous enemies would inspire; the large colonies they would have to form; the rich commerce they would have to found on an immense cultivation;

tivation; the ranks and societies they would have to create; and the maxims, laws, and manners they would have to establish on the principles of reason: All these springs of action would, perhaps, make, of an equivocal and miscellaneous race of people, the most flourishing nation that philosophy and humanity could wish for the happiness of the world.

If ever any fortunate revolution should take place in the world, it will begin in America. After having experienced such devastation, this New World must flourish in its turn, and, perhaps, command the Old. It will become the asylum of our people who have been oppressed by political establishments, or driven away by war. The savage inhabitants will be civilized, and oppressed strangers will become free. But it is necessary that this change should be preceded by conspiracies, commotions, and calamities; and that a hard laborious education should predispose their minds both to act and to suffer.

Ye young Creoles, come into Europe to exercise and practise what we teach you; there to collect, in the precious remains of our ancient manners, that vigour which we have lost; there to study our weakness, and draw, from our follies themselves, those lessons of wisdom which produce great events. Let your negroes, whose condition distresses us, and whose blood, perhaps, is mingled in all those ferments, which alter, corrupt, and destroy our population, be left in America. Fly from an education of tyranny, effeminacy and vice, which you contract from the habit of living with slaves, whose stupidity inspires you with none of those elevated and virtuous sentiments which can only give rise to a people that will become famous. America hath poured all the sources of corruption on Europe. To complete its vengeance, it must draw from it all the instruments of its prosperity. As it has been destroyed by our crimes, it must be renewed by our vices.

The Americans seem to have been destined by nature, to a greater share of happiness than the Europeans. In the islands are scarcely known such diseases as the gout, gravel, stone, apoplexies, pleurisies, complaints of the chest, and other disorders, which Win-

ter occasions: None of those scourges of the human race, which are so fatal in other countries, have ever made the least ravages there. If the air of the country can be withstood, and the middle age be attained to, this is sufficient to insure a long and happy course of life. There, old age is not tottering, languishing, and beset with those infirmities which affect it in our climate.

In the Caribbees, however, new-born infants are attacked with a disease which seems peculiar to the torrid zone: It is called *tetanus*. If a child receives the impressions of the air or wind, if the room where it is just born is exposed to smoke, to too much heat or cold, the disorder shows itself immediately. It begins by seizing the jaw, which becomes rigid and fixed, so as not to be opened. This spasm soon communicates itself to the other parts of the body; and the child dies for want of being able to take nourishment. If it escapes this danger, which threatens the nine first days of its existence, it has nothing to fear. The indulgences which are allowed to children before they are weaned, which is at the end of twelve months, such as the use of coffee, chocolate, wine, but especially sugar and sweetmeats; these indulgences that are so pernicious to our children, are offered to those of America by nature, which accustoms them in early age to the productions of their climate.

The fair sex, naturally weak and delicate, has its infirmities as well as its charms. In the islands, they are subject to a weakness; an almost total decay of their strength; an unconquerable aversion for all kind of wholesome food, and an irregular craving after every thing that is prejudicial to their health. Salt or spiced food is what they only relish and desire. This disease is a true cachexy, which commonly degenerates into a dropsy. It is attributed to the diminution of the catamenia in those women who come from Europe, and to the weakness or total suppression of that periodical discharge in Creoles.

Diseases to which the Europeans are subject in the islands.

The

The men, more robust, are liable to more violent complaints. In this vicinity of the equator, they are exposed to a hot and malignant fever, known under different names, and indicated by hæmorrhages. The blood, which is boiling under the fervent rays of the sun, is discharged from the nose, eyes, and other parts of the body. Nature, in temperate climates, does not move with such rapidity, but that, in the most acute disorders, there is time to observe and follow the course she takes. In the islands, her progress is so rapid, that, if we delay to attack the disorder as soon as it appears, its effects are fatal. Thus it is, that the patient, in the space of twenty-four hours, must be bled fifteen or eighteen times, while, in the intervals, he has recourse to other remedies. No sooner is a person seized with sickness, but the physician, the lawyer, and the priest, are all called to his bed-side.

Most of those who survive these violent shocks, being exhausted by the manner in which they have been treated, recover very slowly, and with difficulty. Several fall into an habitual weakness, occasioned by the debility of the whole machine, which the noxious air of the country, and the little nourishment their food supplies, are not able to restore. Hence obstructions, jaundice, and swelling of the spleen, are produced, which sometimes terminate in dropsies.

Almost all the Europeans who land in America, are exposed to this danger, and frequently the Creoles themselves, on their return from more temperate climates. But it never attacks women, whose blood has the natural evacuations, and negroes, who, born under a hotter climate, are inured by Nature, and prepared by a free perspiration, for all the ferments that the sun can produce.

It is certainly owing to the sun, the heat of whose rays, being less oblique, and more constant than in our climates, occasions these violent fevers. Its heat must inevitably produce a thickening of the blood, through the excess of perspiration, a want of elasticity in the solids, a dilatation of the vessels by the impulse of the fluids, whether in proportion to the rarefaction of the air, or the less degree of compression which the surface

face of the bodies is exposed to in a rarefied atmosphere.

Some of these inconveniencies might, perhaps, be prevented, by purging and bleeding on the passage, as we advance toward the torrid zone, by repeating these precautions in the islands, and by the use of the cold bath.

But, far from having recourse to these expedients, which reason indicates, the inhabitants fall into such excesses, as are most likely to hasten and increase the disorder. The strangers who arrive at the Caribbees, excited by the entertainments they are invited to, the pleasures they partake of, and the kind reception they meet with, give themselves up to an immoderate indulgence of all the pleasures which custom renders less prejudicial to those who are born under this climate. Feasting, dancing, gaming, late hours, wine, cordials, and frequently the chagrin of disappointment in their sanguinary expectations, conspire to add to the ferment of an immoderate heat of the blood, which soon becomes inflamed.

With such indulgence, it is scarce possible to resist the heats of this climate; and even the greatest precautions are not sufficient to secure persons from the attack of those dangerous fevers; seeing the most sober, and moderate men, who are the most averse from every kind of excess, and the most careful in all their actions, are victims to the new air they breathe. In the present state of the colonies, of ten men that go into the islands, four English die, three French, three Dutch, three Danes, and one Spaniard.

When it was observed how many men were lost in these regions, at the time they were first occupied, it was generally thought, that the states who had the ambition of settling there, would be depopulated in the end.

EXPERIENCE hath altered the public opinion upon this point. These colonies have been supplied with more means of expence, in proportion as they have extended their plantations. These new means have opened into their

Advantages of those nations that are in possession of the islands.

mother country new sources of consumption. The increase in exportations could not take place without an increase of labour. These labours have brought together a greater number of men, which will ever be the case when the means of subsistence are multiplied. Even foreigners have resorted in great multitudes into those kingdoms, which opened a wide field to their ambition and industry.

Population not only increased among the proprietors of the islands, but the people have also become more happy. Our felicity in general is proportioned to our conveniencies, and it must increase as we can vary and extend them. The islands have been productive of this advantage to their possessors: They have drawn from these fertile regions a number of commodities, the consumption of which hath added to their enjoyments. They have drawn some, which, when exchanged for others among their neighbours, have made them partake of the luxuries of other climates. In this manner, the kingdoms which have acquired the possession of the islands, by lucky circumstances, or by well combined projects, are become the residence of the arts, and of all the polite amusements, which are a natural and necessary consequence of great plenty.

But this is not the only advantage: These colonies have raised the nations that founded them, to a superiority of influence in the political world, in the following manner: Gold and silver, which form the general circulation of Europe, come from Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. They belong neither to the Spaniards nor the Portuguese, but to the people, who give their merchandise in exchange for these metals. These people have accounts between them, that are ultimately settled at Lisbon and Cadiz, which may be looked upon as a common and universal repository. It is in these places that one must judge of the increase or decline of the trade of each nation. That nation whose accounts of sale and purchase are kept in balance with others, acquires its interest entire. That which hath purchased more than it hath sold, withdraws less than its interest; because it hath ceded a part of it, in order to satisfy the demands of the nation to which it was indebted. That which

which has sold more to other nations, than it hath purchased of them, does not only get what was owing from Spain and Portugal, but also the profit it has derived from other nations with whom it hath made exchanges. This last advantage is peculiar to the people who possess these lands. Their capital is annually increased by the sale of the valuable productions of these countries; and the augmentation of their stock confirms their superiority, and renders them the arbiters of peace and war. But we shall explain, in the following book, how far each nation hath increased its power by the possession of the islands.

END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK.

H 2

BOOK

BOOK XII.

Settlements of the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the Danes, in the American islands.

SPAIN has the honour of having first discovered the great Archipelago of the Caribbees, and of having formed the first settlements on them. The island which her navigators fell in with, upon their first arrival in America, is called Trinidad. Columbus landed on it in 1498, when he discovered the Oronooko; but other objects diverted his attention both from that island as well as the coasts of the neighbouring continent. The lustre of the gold, however, which had been seen, from a distance, glittering on the shore, caused them to be revisited by the nation which had first made the discovery. The conquest of these immense regions, which are watered by one of the largest and richest rivers of the universe, was resolved upon; and, in order to insure and facilitate the execution of so great an enterprize, the island of Trinidad, situated at the mouth of the Oronooko, was peopled. An island has always the advantage of a continent, when, having but a small extent of country to defend, it has a very large one to attack; which was the case in the present instance.

The river Oronooko, which, as is commonly supposed, has its rise from the Cordeleras, after being increased, in a course of five hundred and seventy-five leagues, by the influx of a great number of rivers, more or less considerable, empties itself into the ocean, by more than fifty mouths. Its impetuosity is so great, that it prevails against the most powerful tides, and preserves the freshness of its waters to the distance of twelve leagues from that vast and deep channel within which it was confined. Its rapidity, however, is not

always

always the same, owing to a circumstance, perhaps, entirely peculiar. This river, in the month of April, begins to swell, and continues to rise during five months; the sixth, it remains at its greatest height: In October, it begins to subside, and falls gradually till the month of March, during the whole of which, it continues in its most diminished state. These alternate changes are regular, and invariably the same.

This phenomenon, the cause of which is unknown, seems to depend much more on the sea than on the land. During the six months that the river is rising, the hemisphere of the New World presents nothing, so to speak, but water, at least, but little land, to the perpendicular action of the sun's rays. During the six months of its fall, America exhibits nothing but a vast continent to this bright luminary. The sea, at this time, is less subject to the influence of the sun; or, at least, its current, towards the eastern shore, is more balanced, more broken by the land. It must, therefore, leave a freer course to the rivers, which, being then less restrained by the sea, cannot be swelled, but by the melting of the snows from the Cordeleras, or by rains. Perhaps, indeed, the rising of the waters of the Oronooko may depend entirely on the rainy season. But, to comprehend thoroughly the causes of so singular a phenomenon, it would be necessary to consider, how far the course of this river may be affected by that of the Amazons, and to know the track and direction of both rivers. We have reason to imagine, from the difference of their situation, their source, and their opening into the sea, that the cause of so remarkable a difference in the periods of their flux and reflux, may, some time or other, be discovered. There is a general connexion throughout the whole system of the world. The courses of rivers depend either on the diurnal or annual revolutions of the earth. Whenever an enlightened people shall acquire a knowledge of the banks of the Oronooko, they will discover, or, at least, they will endeavour to discover, the causes of these phenomena: The investigation, however, will be attended with difficulties. The river is not so navigable as might be presumed, from its magnitude; its bed is, in many

places, filled up with a great number of rocks, which oblige the navigator, at times, to carry, both his boats, and the merchandize they are laden with, over land.

The people, who cross or frequent this river, bordering on the burning Line, and inhabiting a country, too fruitful, perhaps, to have been cultivated, know neither the trouble of clothes, the restraints of police, nor the burthen of government. Free under the yoke of poverty, they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, and on wild fruits. Agriculture must have made small progress, in a country where they have nothing but a stick to plough with, and hatchets made of stone to cut down trees, which being burned or rotted, leave the soil in a proper state for cultivation.

The misery and oppression to which women are subjected in the New World, is, doubtless, the principal cause of the small number of inhabitants in that part of the globe. This tyranny, which is universal, is more cruelly exerted upon the banks of the Oronooko, than anywhere else; and these countries, of course, though extremely favoured by Nature, are most thinly inhabited. It is a common practice with mothers, to bleed their female children to death, by cutting the navel-string too near the body. Even Christianity has not had influence enough to put an end to this abominable practice. For this, we have the testimony of the Jesuit Gumilla, who being informed, that one of his new female converts was about to perpetrate a murder of this sort, went to find her out, in order to reproach her for her crime in the severest terms. The woman heard the missionary with the greatest composure; and, when he had finished, she asked permission to reply, which she did in the following manner:

"Would to God, Father, would to God, that my mother, the moment she brought me forth, had discovered as much love and compassion to her infant, as to have prevented the miseries I endure, and those I must continue to suffer, till death put an end to my pains! If my mother had stifled me in the birth, I would have been dead; but I would not have felt death; and I would have escaped the most wretched

" of

" of situations. What have I not already suffered, and
 " who knows what still remains for me to suffer !

" Consider, Father, the tortures inflicted by the In-
 " dian men upon their wives, or rather slaves. They
 " go out with us to the woods, with their bows and
 " their arrows : We follow, burdened with the load of
 " carrying one infant in a basket, and another hang-
 " ing at our breasts. They go a-fishing or fowling,
 " while we till the ground, and, after enduring all the
 " fatigues of the cultivation, we are obliged to sustain
 " all the toils of the Harvest. They return in the e-
 " vening without any load ; we are loadened with roots
 " for them to eat, and maize to drink. At their re-
 " turn, they entertain themselves with their friends ;
 " while we are dispatched for wood and water to pre-
 " pare their supper. After the feast is over, they go to
 " sleep ; but we are forced to spend most of the night
 " in grinding maize, and in making chica : And how
 " are we recompensed for all these labours and watch-
 " ings ? They drink, and, when drunk, they drag us
 " by the hair, and trample us under their feet.

" Ah, Father, would to God my mother had dis-
 " led me in the birth ! You know well the justness
 " of our complaints ; you see daily the truth of what
 " I describe. But you are ignorant of our great-
 " est cause of complaint. It is hard for a poor
 " Indian woman to serve a husband, as a slave, in
 " the fields loaded with sweat, and when at home
 " deprived of repose. But, after 20 years labour, it
 " is dreadful to see our husbands fondly bringing home
 " young and unexperienced wives, upon whom they
 " doat, and allowing them to beat us, beat our tender
 " infants, domineer over us, treat us as servants, while
 " the slightest murmur is silenced with the branch of a
 " tree ! Ah, Father, how do you think we should be
 " able to endure such a situation ? Is it not then hu-
 " mane in the Indian women to deliver their children
 " from a slavery which is a thousand times worse than
 " death ? Would to God, I repeat it to you, Father,
 " that my mother had loved me so well, as to have bu-
 " ried me the moment I was born ! This would at
 " once have prevented my sufferings and my tears."

Among

Among all the small nations which wander about in these vast regions, there is one in which, by the nature of the soil, the condition of women is rendered much more comfortable; I mean, those who inhabit that group of islands formed by the different mouths of the Oronooko. Their country, though covered with water six months of the year, when the river is swelled, and overflowed the rest of the year twice a day by the sea, appears to them preferable to every other. They live perfectly secure, in cabins raised above the reach of the water, upon stakes sunk deep in the sands. These sands are covered with palm-trees, which supply the savage inhabitants, who are of a gentle, sociable, and cheerful temper, with food, drink, furniture, and canoes.

It was not till the year 1535, that the Spaniards thought of paying another visit to the river Oronooko. Having been disappointed in their search after mines, they considered it of so little importance, that they never formed more than one small settlement upon it. This is situated at the lower part of the river, and is called St. Thomas. The first colonists applied themselves with so much ardour to the cultivation of tobacco, that they delivered annually ten cargoes to the Dutch. This intercourse having been prohibited by the mother-country, the town, which hath also been twice sacked by pirates, insensibly dwindled to nothing. The whole employment of the place, at present, is to breed a few cattle, which they send to Cumana, by an inland communication.

These vast and fertile regions would soon emerge from their present obscurity, if Spain knew how to avail herself of the active ambition of the Jesuits. It is well known, that these men, admirable as a society, dangerous in a political, and detestable in a religious view, had succeeded so far as to draw from the midst of their forests, a great number of wild natives; to settle them on the banks of the Oronooko, and other rivers, most of which are navigable, that fall into it; to insil into them some social principles, and a taste for some of the more necessary arts, particularly agriculture. Would it not be possible to induce these people, who already cultivate sugar, cotton, tobacco, and

cocoa,

cocoa, for their own consumption, to increase the growth of these commodities, by offering them others in exchange? The distance between a savage and a social state, is immense; but from the infancy of society, to a flourishing state of commerce, there are but a few steps to make. Time, which improves the strength, shortens the distances. Spain would be enriched by her traffic with these new plantations, whose produce might be carried to Trinidad, and thus that island would be restored to its original destination.

BUT, beside the serving as a staple, its extent, the fruitfulness of its soil, and the convenience of its roads, would make it an object in itself of considerable importance. Those, who have surveyed it with sufficient attention and skill, to discern, through the impediments of thick forests, with which it is covered, the real value of it, have esteemed it capable of producing, in abundance, many different commodities, and even such as bear a high price. Yet, its produce hath been confined merely to cocoa; but this was in such perfection, that it was preferred even to that of Caracca; and the Spanish merchants, in order to secure it, strove to anticipate each other, by paying for it in advance. This eagerness, which may sometimes give a spur to the industry of a people naturally active, is sure destruction to those, among whom the desire of ease has the force of a passion, and even almost of a necessity, if not of nature, at least, of habit. The proprietors having received more money than they could repay with that single commodity, in which their whole fortune consisted, fell, by degrees, into despair; and, from the dread of unusual toil, gave over all thoughts of labour. Since the year 1727, there hath been no more cocoa to be found on the island; which, from that time, hath had no correspondence with the metropolis.

The same negligence had before ruined Margarett. This island enjoyed a momentary vigour and prosperity, from a species of wealth drawn from the bottom of the

Spanish settlements at Trinidad, and at Margarett.

the sea which encompassed it. Columbus, in 1498, discovered, at the distance of four leagues from the continent, the little isle of Cubagua, afterwards called Pearl-island. The quantities of this treasure, which nature yielded without any expence, attracted the Spaniards to this place in 1509. They brought with them some savages from the Bahama islands, who had been found not proper for working in the mines, but had a faculty of continuing a long time under water. This talent of theirs was employed with so much ardour, that great fortunes were raised in a very small time. The banks of pearl were exhausted, and the colony was transferred, in 1524, to Margarettta, where some of the same kind had just been discovered, and which disappeared in a still shorter time. From this period, that island, which is fifteen leagues in length, and six in breadth, became more neglected by Spain than Trinidad.

The court of Madrid still maintain possession of these two islands, more for the sake of keeping nations of greater industry at a distance from the continent, than with a view of deriving any advantages to itself. Here is a mixed race, formed between Spaniards and Indian women, who joining the indolence of the savage to the vices of civilized nations, are sluggards, cheats, and zealots. They live on what fish they catch, and bananas, which Nature, out of complaisance as it were to their slothfulness, produces there of a larger size, and better quality than in any other part of the Archipelago. They have a breed of lean and tasteless cattle, with which they carry on a fraudulent traffic to the French colonies, exchanging them for camlets, black veils, linens, silk stockings, white hats, and hardware. The number of their vessels does not exceed thirty sloops without decks.

The tame cattle of these two islands have filled the woods with a breed that is become wild. The inhabitants shoot them, and cut their flesh into slips of three inches in breadth and one in thickness, which they dry, after having melted the fat out of them, so that they will keep three or four months. This provision, which

is called Tassau, is sold in the French settlements for 20 livres (a) an hundred weight.

All the money which the government sends to these two islands, falls into the hands of the commandants, the officers civil and military, and the monks. The remainder of the people, who do not amount to more than sixteen hundred, live in a state of the most deplorable poverty. In time of war, they furnish about two hundred men, who, for the sake of plunder, offer themselves, without distinction, to any of the colonies that happen to be fitting out cruisers for sea.

THE inhabitants of Porto-Rico are of a different turn. That island, which is situated in the centre of the Antilles, is forty leagues in length, and twenty in its greatest breadth. Though it was discovered and visited by Columbus in 1493, the Spaniards neglected it till 1509, when thirst of gold brought them thither from St. Domingo, under the command of Ponce de Leon, to make a conquest, which afterwards cost them dear.

Spanish settlements at Porto-Rico.

Every one knows, that the use of poisoned arms is of the highest antiquity. In most countries it preceded the invention of steel. When darts, headed with stone, bones of fish, or other animals, proved insufficient to repel the attacks of wild beasts, men had recourse to poisonous juices, which, from being originally designed merely for the chase, were afterwards employed in war against their own species. Ambition and revenge set no limits to their outrages, till ages had been spent in drowning whole nations in rivers of blood. When it was discovered, that this effusion of blood produced no advantage, and that, in proportion as the stream swelled in its course, it depopulated countries, and left nothing but deserts, without animation, and without culture; they then came to an agreement, to moderate, in some degree, the thirst of shedding it. They established what are called the laws of war; that is to say, injustice upon injustice, or the interest of kings in the massacre of the people. They do not now cut the

(a) 17 s. 6 d.

the throats of all their victims at once; but reserve some few of the herd to propagate the breed. These laws of war, or of nations, required the abolition of certain abuses in the art of killing. Where fire-arms are to be had, poisoned weapons are forbidden; and, when canon-balls will do the business, chewed bullets are not allowed. O! race unworthy both of heaven or earth, destructive, tyrannical being, man, or devil rather, wilt thou never cease to torment this globe, where thou existest but for a moment? Will thy wars never end but with the annihilation of thy species? Go, then, if thou wouldst advance thy mischief, go, and arm thyself with the poisons of the New World.

Of all the regions, productive of venomous plants, none abounded so much in them as South America, which owed this malignant fertility to a soil in general rank, as if it were purging itself from the slime of a deluge.

The plants called Lianes, of which there were vast numbers in all damp and marshy places, furnished the poison, which was in universal request on the continent. The method of preparing it, was, by cutting them in pieces, then boiling them in water, till the liquor had acquired the consistence of a syrup. After this, they dipped their arrows in it, which were immediately impregnated with the poisonous quality. During several ages, the savages, in general, used these arms in their wars with each other. At length, many of those nations, from the deficiency of their numbers, found the necessity of renouncing so destructive a weapon, and reserved it for beasts, whether large or small, which they could not overtake or overcome. Any animal, whose skin has been raised with one of these poisoned arrows, dies a minute after, without any sign of convulsion or pain. This is not occasioned by the coagulation of the blood, which was a long time the general opinion; recent experiments have proved, that this poison, mixed with blood newly drawn and warm, prevents it from coagulating, and even putrefaction. It is probable, that the effect of these juices is upon the nervous system. Some travellers have imputed the origin of the venereal disease among the inhabitants of the

the New World, to the habit of eating game killed with these poisoned arms. At present, it is universally known, that the flesh of such animals may be eaten for a continuance, without any ill effect.

In the American islands, they draw their poison from trees more than from the Lianes; and of all the venomous sorts of trees, the most deadly is the mancheneel. Its trunk, which is never more than two feet in circumference, is covered with a smooth tender bark. Its flowers are of a reddish cast. Its fruit is of the colour of a peach, and has a stone in the middle. The leaves of it are like those of the laurel, and contain a milky fluid. In the heat of the day, it is dangerous to handle them, on account of the moisture which exudes from their pores; and still more dangerous to repose under them, from the prodigious quantity of dust that falls from the innumerable flowers borne by these trees. Incisions being made in the trunk of them, shells are placed under, to receive the sap; as soon as it is grown a little thick, they steep the points of their arrows in it, which acquire from thence the property of conveying sudden death, be the wound ever so slight. Experience has shown, that this poison preserves its venomous quality above an hundred years. Of all the spots where this fatal tree is found, Porto-Rico is that in which it delighteth most, and where it is found in the greatest abundance. Why were not the first conquerors of America all shipwrecked on this island? It is the misfortune of both worlds, that they became acquainted with it so late, and that they did not there meet with the death which their avarice merited.

The mancheneel seems only to have been fatal to the Americans. The inhabitants of the island where it grows, used it to repel the Caribbees, who made frequent descents on their coasts. They might have employed the same arms against the Europeans; and, as the Spaniards were ignorant, at that time, that salt, applied immediately, is an infallible cure, they would probably have fallen a sacrifice to the first effects of this poison. But they did not meet with the least resistance on the part of the savage inhabitants of the

island. They had been informed of what had occurred in the conquest of the neighbouring isles; and they regarded these strangers as a superior order of beings, to whose chains they voluntarily submitted themselves. It was not long, however, before they wished to shake off the intolerable yoke which had been imposed on them, and postponed the enterprize, only till they could be assured whether their tyrants were immortal. A cacique, named Broyo, was intrusted with this commission.

Chance favoured his design, by bringing to him Salzedo, a young Spaniard, who was travelling. He received him with great respect, and at his departure sent some Indians to attend him on his way, and to serve him in the quality of guides. When they came to the bank of a river, which they were to pass, one of those savages took him on his shoulder to carry him over. As soon as they had got into the midst of it, he threw him into the water, and, with the assistance of his companions, kept him there, till there was no appearance of life. They then dragged him to the bank; but as they were still in doubt, whether he was dead or living, they begged pardon a thousand times for the accident that had happened. This farce lasted three days; till at length, being convinced, by the stench of the corpse, that it was possible for Spaniards to die, the Indians rose on all sides upon their oppressors, and massacred an hundred of them.

Ponce de Leon immediately assembled all the Castilians who had escaped, and, without loss of time, fell upon the savages, who were terrified with this sudden attack. Their panic became more violent, in proportion as the number of their enemies increased. They had even the folly to believe, that these Spaniards, who were just arrived from St. Domingo, were the same that had been killed, and were come to life again to fight them. Under this ridiculous persuasion, dreading to continue a war with men who revive after their death, they submitted once more to the yoke, and, being condemned to the mines, in a short time, fell martyrs to the toils of slavery.

Such

Such acts of barbarity by no means promoted the interests of Spain. An island of considerable extent, enriched by a great number of rivers, fruitful, though unequal; furnished with an excellent port, and coasts of easy access: This island, the possession of which would have made the fortune of an active nation, is scarcely known in the world. The inhabitants amount barely to 1500, including Spaniards, Mestees, and Mulattoes. They have about 3000 negroes, whose employment is rather to gratify the indolence, than to assist the industry of the proprietors. Both masters and slaves, brought nearly upon a footing, by their sloth, subsist alike on maize, potatoes, and cassava. If they cultivate sugar, tobacco, and cocoa, it is only so much of each as is necessary for their own consumption. Their exports consist of about two thousand skins, which they furnish annually to the mother country, and a considerable number of mules, good in their kind, but small, such as are usually found in broken and mountainous countries. These mules are smuggled into Santa-Cruz, Jamaica, and St. Domingo. This colony is protected in its idleness by a garrison of two hundred men; which, with the clergy and civil officers, cost government 250,000 livres (*b*). This money, added to what they get for their cattle, is sufficient to pay the English, Dutch, French, and Danes, for the linens and other merchandise they supply. All the advantage the metropolis derives from this settlement, is, to take in water and fresh provisions there, for the fleets she sends to the New World.

If Spain hath so little consideration for her own interest, as to neglect the advantage which she might draw from an island of such importance, at least she ought to permit such of her subjects, as chance hath conducted there, to emerge from that shameful poverty in which they languish. To render their condition more happy, nothing is wanted but liberty of a free market for their cattle. They could find pasture for as many as would supply the consumption of all the Caribbee islands, where the lands are occupied in tillage. The situation of a settlement in the centre of

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those

those islands, would be a very favourable circumstance for its trade with them. An open communication with active and enlightened people, would excite those colonists who are not so. The desire of partaking in the same enjoyments, would inspire the same ardour for business. The court of Madrid would then reap the political fruits of a condescension which humanity alone should dictate to her. Till this liberty of commerce is granted, Porto-Rico will be of no more service to her than St. Domingo.

Spanish settlement at St. Domingo.

THIS island, famous for being the earliest settlement of the Spaniards in the New World, was at first in high estimation for the quantity of gold it produced: This wealth diminished with the inhabitants of the country, whom they obliged to dig it out of the bowels of the earth; and the source of it was entirely dried up, when the neighbouring islands no longer supplied the loss of those wretched victims to the avarice of the conqueror. A vehement desire of opening again this source of wealth, inspired the thought of getting slaves from Africa; but, besides that these were found unfit for the labours they were destined to, the multitude of mines which then began to be wrought on the continent, made those of St. Domingo no longer of any importance. An idea now suggested itself, that their negroes, which were healthy, strong, and patient, might be usefully-employed in husbandry; and they adopted, through necessity, a wise resolution, which, had they known their own interest, they would have embraced by choice.

The produce of their industry was at first extremely small, because the labourers were few. Charles V., who, like most sovereigns, preferred his favourites to every thing, had granted an exclusive right of the slave trade to a Flemish nobleman, who made over his privilege to the Genoese. Those avaricious republicans conducted this infamous commerce, as all monopolies are conducted; they resolved to sell dear, and they sold but few. When time and competition had fixed the natural and necessary price of slaves, the

number

number of them increased. It may easily be imagined, that the Spaniards, who had been accustomed to treat the Indians, though they differed but little in complexion from themselves, as beasts, did not entertain a higher opinion of these negro Africans, whom they substituted in their place. Degraded still farther in their eyes by the price they had paid for them, even religion could not restrain them from aggravating the weight of their servitude. It became intolerable; and these wretched slaves made an effort to recover the unalienable rights of mankind. Their attempt proved unsuccessful; but they reaped this benefit from their despair, that they were afterwards treated with more humanity.

This moderation (if tyranny, cramped by the apprehension of revolt, can deserve that name) was attended with good consequences. Cultivation was pursued with some degree of success. Soon after the middle of the sixteenth century, the metropolis drew annually from this colony, ten million weight of sugar, a large quantity of wood for dying, tobacco, cocoa, cassia, ginger, cotton, and peltry in abundance. One might imagine, that such favourable beginnings would give both the desire and the means of carrying them farther; but a train of events, more fatal each than the other, ruined these hopes.

The first misfortune arose from the depopulation of St. Domingo. The Spanish conquests on the continent should naturally have contributed to promote the success of an island, which Nature seemed to have formed to be the centre of that vast dominion arising around it, to be the staple of the different colonies. But it fell out quite otherwise: On a view of the immense fortunes that were made in Mexico, and other parts, the richest inhabitants of St. Domingo began to despise their settlements, and quitted the true source of riches, which is on the surface of the earth, to go and ransack the bowels of it for veins of gold, which are quickly exhausted. The government endeavoured in vain to put a stop to this emigration; the laws were always either artfully eluded, or openly violated.

The weakness, which was a necessary consequence of such a conduct, encouraged the enemies of Spain to ravage these coasts, which were quite defenceless. Even the capital of this island was taken and pillaged by that celebrated English sailor, Francis Drake. The cruisers of less consequence, contented themselves with intercepting vessels in their passage through those latitudes, the best known at that time of any in the New World. To complete the mischief, the Castilians themselves commenced pirates. They attacked no ships but those of their own nation, which were more rich; worse provided, and worse defended than any others. The custom they had of fitting out ships clandestinely, in order to procure slaves, prevented them from being known; and the assistance they purchased from the ships of war commissioned to protect the trade, insured to them impunity.

The foreign trade of the colony was its only resource, in this distress; and that was illicit: But as it continued to be carried on, notwithstanding the vigilance of the governors, or, perhaps, by their connivance, the policy of an exasperated and short-sighted court, exerted itself in demolishing most of the seaports, and driving the miserable inhabitants into the inland country. This act of violence threw them into a state of dejection, which the incursions and settlement of the French on the island afterwards, carried to the utmost pitch.

Spain, totally taken up with that vast empire, which she had formed on the continent, used no pains to dissipate this lethargy. She even refused to listen to the solicitations of her Flemish subjects, who earnestly pressed that they might have permission to clear those fertile lands. Rather than run the risk of seeing them carry on a contraband trade on the coasts, she chose to bury in oblivion, a settlement, which had been of consequence, and was likely to become so again.

This colony, which had no longer any intercourse with the metropolis, but by a single ship, of no great burthen, received from thence every third year, consisted, in 1717, of eighteen thousand four hundred and ten inhabitants, including Spanish, Mestees, Negroes,

or

or Mulattoes. The complexion and character of these people, differed according to the different proportions of American, European, and African blood they had received from that natural and transient union which restores all races and conditions to the same level; for love, like death, pays no respect to persons. These demi-savages, plunged in the extreme of sloth, lived upon fruits and roots, dwelt in cottages without furniture, and most of them without clothes. The few among them, in whom indolence had not totally suppressed the sense of decency, and taste for the conveniences of life, purchased clothes of their neighbours the French, in return for their cattle, and the money sent to them for the maintenance of two hundred soldiers, the priests, and the government. It does not appear that the company, formed at Barcelona in 1757, with exclusive privileges for the re-establishment of St. Domingo, hath as yet made any considerable progress. They send out only two small vessels annually, which are freighted back with six thousand hides, and some other commodities of little value.

St. Domingo, the capital of the colony, and the place where this traffic is carried on, is situated on the side of a plain thirty leagues in length, and from eight to twelve in breadth. This large tract, which, properly cultivated, would furnish provisions to the amount of 20,000,000 livres, (a) is covered with forests and underwood, with here and there some pasture land interspersed, which serves for a considerable number of cattle. This spot, which is level throughout almost its whole extent, becomes unequal in the neighbourhood of the town, which is built on the banks of the Lozama. Some magnificent ruins are almost all the remains of the once flourishing state of this celebrated city. On the land-side, it has no fortification, but a simple wall, without either ditch, or outworks; but, towards the river and the sea, it is well provided. Such is the only settlement the Spaniards have kept up on the southern coast.

On the north, there is one called Monte Christo. Happily this maritime and commercial place hath had

(a) 875,000 l.

no connection with Spain. It owes its trade to the vicinity of the French plantations. In time of peace, the produce of the plain of Mariboux, situated between fort Dauphin and bay Mancheneel, is all carried to this port, which is constantly filled with English smugglers. When there is a rupture between the courts of London and Versailles, without engaging that of Madrid, Monte Christo becomes a very considerable market; for, all the northern part of the French colony send their commodities thither, where they never fail of meeting with ships ready to take them off; but the moment Spain finds herself called upon to take a part in the disputes between the two rival nations, this brisk trade ceases.

The Spaniards have no settlement in the western part of the island, which is entirely occupied by the French; and it is not above nine or ten years since they thought of settling to the eastward, which they had long entirely neglected.

The project of cultivation, which accidentally found its way into the council at Madrid, might be carried into execution in the plain of Vega-Real, which is situated in the inland country, and is fourscore leagues in length, by ten, in its greatest breadth. It would be difficult to find, throughout the New World, a spot more level, more fruitful, or better watered. All the productions of America would succeed admirably there; but it would be impossible to remove them from thence, without making roads, which is an undertaking that would stagger nations more enterprising than the Spaniards. These difficulties should naturally have led them to fix their eyes on the plains of St. Domingo, which are fruitful, though not in so great a degree as those of Vega-Real. Probably they were apprehensive, that the new colonists would adopt the manners of the old, so they determined upon Samana.

Samana is a peninsula, on the eastern part of the island, five leagues broad, and sixteen long; and is joined to the continent by a narrow slip of very marshy ground. It forms a bay of fourteen leagues in length, where the anchorage is in fourteen fathom, and so commodious, that the ships may ly close to the shore.

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This bay is full of little islands, which, it is easy to keep clear of, by steering close to the western coast. Besides the possession of a fertile, though not a level soil, this neck of land affords a situation very advantageous for trade, and for bringing the ships that come from Europe close to the shore.

These considerations induced the first adventurers from France, who ravaged St. Domingo, to settle at Samana; where they maintained their ground a long time, though surrounded by their enemies. At length, it was found that they were too much exposed, and at too great a distance from the rest of the French settlements on the island, which were every day improving. In consequence of this, they were recalled. The Spaniards rejoiced at their departure, but did not take possession of the spot they had quitted.

Within these few years, however, they have sent thither some people from the Canaries: the state was at the expence of the voyage, and of their maintenance for several years. These measures, prudent as they were, have not been attended with success. The new inhabitants have, for the most part, fallen victims to the climate, to the clearing, and, above all, to the arbitrary impositions of the governors, whose military turn is ever fatal to colonies. Of these strangers, the few that have survived so many evils, languish under the expectation of approaching death. Such unsuccessful beginnings promise no very fortunate consequences. St. Domingo is likely to continue, as far as concerns the Spaniards, in the same feeble state they have left it till now; but Nature and Fortune will make them amends by Cuba.

THE island of Cuba, which is separated from St. Domingo by a narrow channel, is of itself equal in value to a kingdom: It is two hundred and fifty leagues in length, and in breadth from fifteen to twenty and thirty. Though it was discovered by Columbus, in 1492, the Spaniards did not attempt to make themselves masters of it till 1511, when Diego de Velasquez came with four ships, and landed on the eastern point.

A cacique,

A cacique, whose name was Hatuey, presided over this district. He was a native of St. Domingo, or Hispaniola, and had retired hither to avoid the slavery to which his countrymen were condemned. Those who could escape the tyranny of the Castilians, had followed him in his retreat, where he formed a little state, and ruled in peace. At a distance he observed the Spanish sails, whose approach he dreaded. On the first news he received of their arrival, he called together the bravest Indians, both of his subjects and allies, to animate them to a defence of their liberty; assuring them, at the same time, that all their efforts would be ineffectual, if they did not first render the God of their enemies propitious to them: *Behold him there*, said he, pointing to a vessel filled with gold, *behold that mighty divinity, let us invoke his aid!*

This simple and good-natured people easily believed, that gold, for the sake of which so much blood was shed, was the god of the Spaniards. They danced and sang before the rude and unfashioned ore, and resigned themselves wholly to its protection.

But Hatuey, more enlightened, and more suspicious than the other Caciques, assembled them again. *We must not*, said he to them, *expect any happiness, so long as the god of the Spaniards remains among us. He is no less our enemy than they. They seek for him in every place, and establish themselves wherever they find him. Were he hidden in the cavities of the earth, they would discover him. Were we to swallow him, they would plunge their hands into our bowels, and drag him out. There is no place, but the bottom of the sea, that can elude their search. When he is no longer among us, doubtless, we shall be forgotten by them.* As soon as he had done speaking, every man brought out his gold, and threw it into the sea.

Notwithstanding this, the Spaniards advanced. Their muskets and cannons, those tremendous deities, dispersed, with their thunder, the savages who endeavoured to resist: But, as Hatuey might reassemble them, he was pursued through the woods, taken, and condemned to be burned. When he was fastened to the stake,

flame, and waited only for the kindling of the fire, an inhuman priest advanced to propose the ceremony of baptism, and to speak to him of Paradise. *Are there, said the Cacique, any Spaniards in that happy place? Yes, replied the missionary; but there are none but good ones. The best of them, returned Hatuey, are good for nothing. I will not go to a place, where I should be in danger of meeting one of them. Talk no more to me of your religion; but leave me to die.*

The Cacique was burned, the God of the Christians was dishonoured, and his cross was stained with human blood; but Velasquez found no more enemies to oppose him. All the Caciques hastened to do homage to him. After the mines had been opened, and it was found that they did not answer, the inhabitants of Cuba being become useless, were exterminated; for, at that time, to conquer, was to destroy. One of the largest islands in the world did not cost the Spaniards a single man; but what profit have they drawn from the conquest of Cuba?

The settlement they have formed upon this island may be considered in three views, each of which merits a serious attention. The first is, on account of the produce of the country, which is considerable; the second, as being the staple of a great trade; and the third, as being the key to the New World.

Cotton is naturally the principal production of this vast island. This shrub, at the time of the conquest, was very common there. The preservation of it required little expence or labour; and the general dryness of the soil adapted it particularly to this purpose. The commodity, however, is now become so scarce, that, sometimes, several years pass without any of it being sent to Europe.

Although the Spaniards have an insurmountable aversion to imitation, yet they have, of late, adopted the cultivation of coffee at Cuba, having observed the rapid progress it made in the neighbouring islands. But, in borrowing the commodity from foreign colonists, they have not borrowed their diligence in improving it. Their whole produce of coffee barely amounts to thirty or five and thirty thousand weight, one third of which

which is exported to Vera Cruz, and the rest to Madrid. One should naturally conclude, that the growth of this plant will increase, in proportion as the use of a liquor, so familiar to people in hot climates, shall become more common among the Spaniards; but a nation, which was the first to introduce into Europe a taste for coffee, and the last to adopt it both in Europe and America, will be slow in all its improvements, as it is in every kind of invention. The propagation of coffee requires that of sugar; it may be worth while, therefore, to enquire how far the Spaniards are prepared by the one for the other.

Sugar, which is the richest and most valuable production of America, would of itself be sufficient to give to Cuba, that flourishing state of prosperity, every source and channel of which Nature seems to have opened for her. Although this island, is, in general, unequal and mountainous, yet it has plains sufficiently extensive, and sufficiently watered, to supply the consumption of the greatest part of Europe in that article. The incredible fertility of its new lands, if properly managed, would enable it to surpass every other nation, however they may have got the start of it; their labour, of more than half a century, spent in bringing their works to perfection, would end in this, that a rival, by taking up their method, would outstrip them, and, in less than twenty years, engross the whole of their profits. But the Spanish colony is so jealous of their superiority, that to this day they have but few plantations, where, with the finest canes, they make, at a great expence, but a small quantity of sugar, and that of a coarser sort. This serves partly for the Mexican market, and partly for the metropolis; which, instead of making a gold mine, as it should do, of its sugar trade, buys to the value of more than five millions at foreign markets.

It has probably been expected, that the tobacco imported from Cuba would make amends for this loss; for, after furnishing Mexico and Peru, there was sufficient, with the little brought from Casacca and Buenos Ayres, to supply the demands of all Spain. The greatest part comes there in leaf. That which is cured

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in the country by Pedro Alonzo, has been, and is still held in the highest esteem. This Spaniard, the only one perhaps who has enriched himself by a truly useful industry, has gained in this trade between 12,000,000 and 15,000,000 livres (*a*). If the government had listened to this active citizen, the national wealth would have been augmented by the increased growth of a plant, which caprice renders so valuable. The decay of this trade is solely owing to the negligence of the court of Madrid, in not gratifying the general taste of Europe for tobacco from the Havannah.

The Spanish colonies have an universal trade in skins. Cuba produces annually ten or twelve thousand. The number might be easily increased in a country abounding with wild cattle, where gentlemen possess on the coasts, and in the inland parts, large tracts of country, which for want of population can scarcely be applied to any other purpose than that of breeding cattle.

It would be saying too much, to assert, that the hundredth part of this island is cleared: The only places where there are any traces of cultivation to be seen, are at St. Jago, a port to the windward of the colony, and at Matanga, a safe and spacious bay at the mouth of the old canal. The true plantations are all confined to the beautiful plains of the Havannah, and even these are not what they ought to be.

All these plantations together may employ about five and twenty thousand male and female slaves, of every age. The number of whites, mestees, mulattoes, and free negroes, upon the whole island, amount to near thirty thousand. The food of these different species of inhabitants, consists of excellent pork, detestable beef, (both in great plenty and exceedingly cheap,) and manioc. Even the troops have no other bread than the cassava. The habit of seeing Europeans frequently at Cuba, has, probably, preserved the inhabitants from that languid state of inaction which prevails in all the other Spanish colonies in the New World. It must be farther observed, that the people are less mixed, their

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(*a*) From about 500,000 l. to 650,000 l. Sterling.

dress more decent, and their manners better regulated than in the other islands.

The state of the colony would be still more flourishing, if its productions had not been made the property of a company, whose exclusive privilege operates as a constant and invariable principle of discouragement. The less industrious a nation is inclined to be, the more careful it ought to be to avoid every measure that may tend to obstruct the progress of the more active and laborious part of the people.

If any thing could supply the want of an open trade at Cuba, and atone for the grievances occasioned by this monopoly, it would be the advantage this island has always enjoyed, of being the rendezvous of almost all the Spanish vessels that sail to the New World. This practice commenced almost with the colony itself. Ponce de Leon having made an attempt upon Florida in 1512, became acquainted with the new canal of Bahama. It was immediately discovered, that this would be the best route the ships bound from Mexico to Europe could possibly take; and, in consequence of this, was formed the settlement at the Havannah, which is but two short days journey from the canal. This port was afterwards found very convenient for vessels dispatched from Carthagena and Porto-Bello, which in a short time pursued the same course; always putting in there and waiting for each other, that they might set sail in greater state for the metropolis. The vast sums expended during their stay, by sailors, whose cargoes consisted of the richest treasures of the universe, made the city abound in money. The number of its inhabitants, which, in 1561, consisted only of three hundred families, and was nearly doubled at the beginning of the seventeenth century, amounts at present to ten thousand souls.

One part of them is employed in the dock-yards, formerly erected by government, for building ships of war. All their masts, iron, and cables, are brought from Europe; the other materials are found in abundance upon the island. But that which is most valuable, is the timber, which, growing under the influence of the hottest rays of the sun, lasts with moderate

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rate care for a whole century; whereas European ships dry and split under the torrid zone. This wood begins to grow scarce in the neighbourhood of the Havannah; but it is very plentiful on all the coasts, and the transportation of it is neither dear nor difficult. Spain is the more interested to multiply its docks, as the seas most frequented by its shipping, all ly between the tropics. There is still another motive for making the yards at the Havannah the principal resource of its naval power, and that is, the pains which are now taking to render this key to all its colonies impregnable. The importance of the undertaking may perhaps make the detail of it not disagreeable.

Every one knows, that the harbour of the Havannah is one of the safest in the universe; that the fleets of the whole world might ride at anchor there together; that the water is excellent, and easily procured. The entrance is secured by rocks, which make it necessary to keep an exact course, in order to avoid striking on them. It is become more difficult since the year 1762, when they sunk three men of war there. This precaution has proved detrimental only to the Spaniards, who have not yet been able to weigh up those large vessels; and there was the less reason for it, as the enemy would not have attempted to force their way into the harbour, which was defended by the Moro and the fort on the point. The former of these fortresses is raised so high above the level of the sea, that even a first rate man of war could not batter it. The other has not the same advantage; but then it cannot be attacked but by a very narrow channel, where the warmest assailants could never withstand the numerous and formidable artillery of the Moro.

The Havannah, therefore, can only be attacked on the land side. Fifteen or sixteen thousand men, which are the most that could be employed in this expedition, would not be sufficient to invest the works, which cover a vast extent. Their efforts must be directed either to the right or left of the port, against the town or the Moro. If the latter, they may easily land within a league of the fort, and will come within sight of

it, without difficulty, by good roads, through woods which will cover and secure their march.

The first difficulty will be that of getting water, which, in the neighbourhood of the camp they must unavoidably choose, is mortal. To procure such as is drinkable, they must go in boats to the distance of three leagues, and it will be necessary to send a considerable force for this purpose, to the only river where it is to be had, or to leave a detachment there in intrenchments; which being at a distance from the camp, without communication or support, will be in perpetual danger of being cut off.

Previous to the attack of the Moro, they must make themselves masters of the Cavagna, which has been lately built. It is a crown work, composed of a bastion, two curtains, and two demi-bastions in front. Its right and left ly upon the bank of the harbour. It has casemates, reservoirs of water, and powder magazines that are bomb-proof, and a good covered way, and a wide ditch cut in the rock. The road which leads to it, is composed of stones and pebbles, without any mixture of earth. The Cavagna is placed on an eminence which commands the Moro; but is itself exposed to attacks from a hill, which is of an equal height, and not more than three hundred paces distant from it. As it would be easy for an enemy to open their trenches under the cover of this hill, the Spaniards intend to level it; after which the Cavagna may extend its view and its batteries to a great distance. If the garrison should be so pressed, as not to be able to maintain its post, it might blow up its works, which are all undermined, and retreat into the Moro, the communication with which cannot possibly be cut off.

The famous fortress of the Moro had, towards the sea, on which side it is impregnable, two bastions; and on the land side two others, with a wide and deep ditch cut out of the rock. Since it was taken, it has been entirely rebuilt, and its parapets made higher and thicker. They have added a good covered way, and every thing that was wanting to secure the garrison and the stores. It is not easier to open trenches before this place than the Cavagna. Both of them are built

built with a soft stone, which will be less dangerous to the defenders than the common sort of free stone.

Independent of these advantages, the two fortresses have in their favour, a climate extremely hazardous to besiegers, and an easy communication with the town for receiving all sorts of provisions, without a possibility of being interrupted. These advantages render these two places almost impregnable, at least very difficult to be taken, provided they are properly stocked with provisions, and defended with courage and ability. The preservation of them is of so much greater importance, as their loss would necessarily occasion the surrender of the harbour and town, which are both of them commanded and may be battered from these eminences.

After having explained the difficulties of taking the Havannah by attacking the Moro, we must next speak of those which must be encountered on the side of the town.

It is situated near the bottom of the harbour. It was defended as well towards the harbour as to the country, by a dry wall, which was good for nothing, and twenty-one bastions, which were not much better. It had a dry ditch, and of little depth. Before this ditch was a kind of covered way, almost in ruins. The place, in this state, could not have resisted a sudden attempt, which, had it been made in the night, and supported by several attacks, true or false, would certainly have carried it. They propose at present to make wide and deep ditches, and to add an exceeding good covered way.

These necessary defences will be supported by the fort at the point; which is a square, built of stone, and, though small, is provided with casemates. It has been rebuilt, having been very much damaged during the siege. It is surrounded by a good dry ditch, dug out of the rock. Independent of its principal destination, which is to co-operate with the Moro in defending the port, and for which it is perfectly well calculated, it has several batteries which open upon the country, and flank some parts of the town-wall.

Its fire crosses that of a fort of four bastions, which has a ditch, covered way, powder magazine, casemates, and reservoirs of water. This new fortification, which is erected at three quarters of a mile from the place, on an eminence called Arostigny, will require a siege in form, if the town is to be attacked on that side, particularly as it is so constructed as to have a view of the sea, to command a considerable tract on the land side, and to disturb an enemy exceedingly in getting water, which they must bring from its neighbourhood.

In perambulating the city, we come to the fort Dalteres, which has been raised since the siege. It is of stone, has four bastions, a covered way, a half-moon before the gate, a wide ditch, a good rampart, reservoirs, casemates, and a powder magazine. It is barely three quarters of a mile distant from the town, and is situated on the other side of a river and an impassable morass, which cover it in that direction. The rising ground upon which it is built, is entirely occupied by it, and has been insulated by the digging of a broad ditch, into which the sea has a passage from the bottom of the harbour. Besides its commanding the communication between the town and the interior part of the island, it defends the circuit of the place by crossing its fires with those of Arostigny. They are going to construct a large redbut in the interval of these two forts, which will be an additional protection to the town. The Dalteres also crosses its fire with that of the Moro, which is very high, and situated at the extreme point of the fort.

Such a continuation of works, which will require a garrison of four thousand men, and might be finished in two or three years, cost Spain immense sums. The purchase of the mere materials cost her at first 10,000,000 livres (*a*); the employment of them annually amounts to 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 (*b*). Four thousand blacks belonging to the government, and a number of Mexicans, condemned to the publick works, are the instruments of this undertaking. They might have hastened the end of the toils

of

(*a*) 437,500 l.(*b*) About 285,000 l. upon an average.

of so many victims, if they would have permitted the troops to take a share of the burthen, which they wished, as a means to rescue them from that dreadful indigence under which they languish.

If it were allowable to form an opinion upon a subject, which our profession does not give us a right to understand, we might venture to assert, that when all these works shall be finished, those who would undertake the siege of the Havannah, should begin by the Cavagna and the Moro; because, when these forts are once taken, the town must of course surrender, or be destroyed by the artillery of the Moro. On the contrary, if they should determine for the town side, the besiegers would scarcely find themselves in a better condition, even after they had taken it. Indeed they would have it in their power to destroy the dockyards, and the ships that might happen to be in the harbour; but this would produce no permanent advantage. In order to establish themselves, they must still be obliged to take the Cavagna and the Moro, which in all probability they would find impossible, after the loss they must have sustained in the attack of the town and its fortresses.

But whatever plan may be pursued in the siege of this place, the assailants will not only have to combat the numerous garrison inclosed within its works, but they will be opposed by troops, which will take the field, and continually interrupt their operations. This small army will be composed of two squadrons of European dragoons, well mounted, armed and disciplined, and a company of an hundred miquelets. To these may be added, all the inhabitants of the island, whites, mulattoes, and free negroes, who are regimented to the number of ten thousand men; but as the greatest part of them have no idea of discipline, they would only create confusion. This, however, will not be the case with a regiment of cavalry of four squadrons, and seven battalions of militia, which since the peace they have accustomed to perform their manœuvres with astonishing regularity. These troops armed, clothed, and accoutred at the expence of the government, and paid in time of war upon the footing of regulars, are trained.

trained and commanded by majors, serjeants, and corporals sent from Europe, and picked from the most distinguished regiments. The forming of this militia costs an immense sum. Whether their service will be answerable to the expence, is a question which future events alone can determine. But, whatever may be the military spirit of these troops, we may pronounce beforehand, that this establishment, in a political view, is inexcusable, for the following reasons :

The project of making soldiers of all the colonists of Cuba, a most unjust and destructive project to all colonies, has been pursued with too much ardour. The violence they have been forced to use with the inhabitants to make them submit to exercises, which they were averse from, has produced other effects than that of increasing their natural love of repose. They detest those mechanical and forced movements, which, not contributing in any respect to their happiness, appear doubly insupportable ; not to mention, their seeming frightful or ridiculous to a people, who, probably, think they have no interest in defending a government, by which they are oppressed. This unwillingness to exert themselves, extends even to the labour which is necessary for cultivating their lands. They have entirely left off clearing, planting, and tilling for a nation, which regards them in no other light than as labourers. The establishment of the militia too, put a stop to agriculture. Those productions which were gradually improving, have diminished, and will be totally lost, if Spain continues obstinately to pursue a pernicious system, which false principles have induced her to adopt. The rage of keeping up an army ; that madness, which, under pretence of preventing wars, encourages them ; which, by introducing despotism into governments, paves the way for rebellion among the people ; which, continually dragging the inhabitant from his dwelling, and the husbandman from his field, extinguishes in them the love of their country, by driving them from their home ; which oversets nations, and carries them over land and sea : That mercenary profession of war, so different from the truly military spirit, sooner or later will be the ruin

ruin of Europe ; but much sooner of the colonies, and, perhaps, first of all, of those which belong to Spain.

The Spaniards possess the most extensive and most fertile part of the American Archipelago. These islands, in the hands of an industrious nation, would have proved a source of unbounded wealth. In their present state, they are vast forests, exhibiting only a frightful solitude. Far from contributing to the strength and riches of the kingdom they belong to, they serve only to weaken and to exhaust it by the expences required to maintain them. If Spain had attended properly to the political improvements of other nations, she would have discovered that several of them owed their influence solely to the advantages they have drawn from islands, in every respect inferior to those which have hitherto only served the ignominious purpose of swelling the list of her numberless and useless possessions. She would have learned, that there is no other rational foundation of colonies, especially of those which have no mines, but agriculture.

It is not doing justice to the Spaniards to suppose, that they are naturally incapable of labour and fatigue. If we give the least attention to the excessive fatigues which those of them who are concerned in contraband trade, submit to with the utmost patience, we shall find that their toils are infinitely more grievous, than any that attend the management of a plantation. If they neglect to enrich themselves by agriculture, it is the fault of their government. If they were once freed from the tyranny of monopolies ; if they were permitted to buy the implements of husbandry at a moderate rate ; if the produce of their cultivation was not subject to such exorbitant duties ; if they were not oppressed, as soon as it is found that they begin to be successful ; if industry was not looked upon as a dangerous virtue ; if interested individuals were not permitted to exercise an absolute and venal authority over them, they would throw off that habit of indolence and inactivity, by

The Spaniards not incapable, as is supposed, of bringing their colonies to great perfection.

which

which Spain is almost annihilated. It is astonishing that a kingdom, which, under Charles V., was as it were the head which directed all the motions of Europe, should now be a feeble and lifeless part of it; and that a state, which makes the principal figure in the map of our continent, should make the most contemptible one in the history of it.

If Spain would recover from her infatuation, let her support her colonists. The treasures of Mexico and Peru are at hand to give riches to the islands; and the generous assistance will be amply repaid. All the productions of the New World require a capital in advance: Sugar in particular demands a large fund, and the returns are proportionable to it. There is not a single inhabitant at Trinidad, Margarett, Porto-Rico, or St. Domingo, capable of the undertaking; and there are not above thirty at Cuba. All these unemployed, drooping colonists, seem to join in one common petition to the metropolis, for means to shake off the lethargy in which they are plunged. Alas! might the disinterested historian, who neither seeks nor desires any thing but the general good of mankind, be permitted to furnish them with those sentiments and expressions, from which the habit of sloth, the rigour of government, and prejudices of every kind seem to have precluded them; he would thus, in their name, address the court of Madrid, and the whole Spanish nation.

“ Reflect on what we ask of you, and see, if you will
 “ not reap a centuple advantage by the valuable commodities with which we shall supply your now expiring commerce. Your marine, increased by our
 “ labours, will form the only bulwark that can preserve to you those possessions which are now ready
 “ to escape from your hands. As we become more
 “ rich, our consumption will be the greater; and then
 “ the country, which you inhabit, and which droops
 “ with you, though Nature herself invites it to fertility, those plains, which present to your eyes only a
 “ desert, and are a disgrace to your laws and to
 “ your manners, will be converted into fields of plenty.
 “ Your native land will flourish by industry and agriculture, which have now forsaken you. The
 “ springs

“ springs of life and activity, which you shall convey
 “ to us through the channel of the sea, will flow back,
 “ and encompass your dwellings with rivers of abun-
 “ dance. But if you are insensible to our complaints
 “ and misfortunes; if you do not govern us for our
 “ sakes; if we are only the victims of our loyalty;
 “ recal to your minds that ever-celebrated æra, in
 “ which a nation of unfortunate and discontented
 “ subjects shook off the yoke of your dominion; and
 “ by their toils, their success, and their opulence, jus-
 “ tified their revolt in the eyes of the whole world.
 “ They have been free near two centuries; and shall
 “ we still have to lament, that we are governed by
 “ you? When Holland broke in pieces the rod of iron,
 “ which crushed her; when she rose from the depth
 “ of the waters to rule over the sea; heaven, without
 “ doubt, raised her up as a monument of freedom, to
 “ point out to the nations of the world the path of
 “ happiness, and to intimidate faithless kings who
 “ would exclude them from it.”

In effect, this commonwealth, which hath for a long
 time stood upon an equality with the greatest kings,
 rose to that height partly by the prosperity of her co-
 lonies. What means she hath pursued to attain this
 end, we are now to consider.

BEFORE the discovery of the western
 coast of Africa, the passage to India by
 the cape of Good Hope, and particularly
 before the discovery of America, the
 European nations scarcely knew, or visit-
 ed each other, except in making labo-
 rious incursions, the aim of which was
 plunder, and the consequence, destruc-
 tion. Excepting a small number of ty-
 rants, who, by oppressing the weak, found
 means to support a luxury dearly purcha-
 sed, all the inhabitants of the different states were
 obliged to content themselves with the meagre sub-
 sistence furnished them by lands ill cultivated, and a
 trade, which extended only to the frontiers of each
 province. Those great events towards the end of the
 fifteenth

*The Dutch
 establish
 themselves at
 Curassou, St.
 Eustatia,
 Saba and St.
 Martin.
 The use of
 these small
 islands.*

fifteenth century, which form one of the most brilliant epochas of the history of the world, did not produce so sudden a change of manners, as might naturally be supposed. Some of the Hanse-towns and some Italian republicks, it is true, ventured as far as Cadiz, and Lisbon, which were become great marts, to purchase the rare and valuable productions of both the Indies; but the consumption was very small, through the inability of the several nations to pay for them. Most of them were languishing in a state of absolute lethargy; they were totally ignorant of the advantages and resources of the countries that belonged to them.

To rouse them from this state of insensibility, there was wanting a people, who, springing from nothing, should inspire activity and intelligence into every mind, and diffuse plenty through every market; who should offer the produce of all countries at a lower price, and exchange the superfluities of every nation for those commodities which they want; who should give a quick circulation to produce, merchandise, and money; and by facilitating and increasing consumption, should encourage population, agriculture, and every branch of industry. For all these advantages, Europe is indebted to the Dutch. The blind multitude may be excused in confirming to themselves the enjoyment of their prosperity, without knowing the sources of it; but it is incumbent on the philosopher and the politician to transmit to posterity the fame of the benefactors of mankind; and to trace out, if it be possible, the progress of their beneficence.

When the generous inhabitants of the United Provinces freed themselves from the dominion of the sea and of tyranny, they perceived that they could not fix the foundation of their liberty in a soil, which did not even afford the necessaries of life. They were convinced, that commerce, which to most nations is no more than an accession, a means only of increasing the quantity and value of the produce of their respective countries, was to them the sole basis of their existence. Without territory, and without productions, they determined to give a value to those of other nations; satisfied that
their

their own would be the result of the general prosperity. The event justified their policy.

Their first step was, to establish among the nations of Europe an exchange of the commodities of the north with those of the south. In a short time, the sea was covered with the ships of Holland. All the commercial effects of different countries were collected in her ports, and from thence they were dispersed to their respective destinations. Here the value of every thing was regulated, and with a moderation which precluded all competition. The ambition of giving greater stability and extent to her enterprizes, excited in the republick a spirit of conquest. Her empire extended itself over a part of the Indian continent, and over all the islands of any consequence in the sea that encompass it. By her fortresses, or her fleets, she kept in subjection the coasts of Africa, on which she cast an attentive eye, foreseeing, that they would be of advantage to her in attaining the object of her ambition; but her laws were nowhere acknowledged, except in the countries belonging to America, where cultivation had sowed the seeds of real wealth. The immense chain of her connections embraced the universe, of which, by toil and industry, she became the soul. In a word, she had attained the universal monarchy of commerce.

Such was the state of the United Provinces, when the Portuguese, in 1661, recovering themselves from that languor and inaction, which the tyranny of Spain had thrown them into, found means to repossess themselves of that part of Brazil which the Dutch had taken from them. From this first stroke, that republick would have lost all footing in the New World, had it not been for a few small islands; particularly that of Curassou, which they took from the Castilians in 1634, who had been in possession of it ever since 1527.

This rock, which is not above three leagues off the coast of Venezuela, is about ten leagues long and five broad. It has an excellent harbour, but the entrance is difficult. The basin is extremely large, and convenient in every respect, and is defended by a fort skilfully constructed and always kept in good repair.

The French, in 1673, having corrupted the commandant, landed there to the number of five or six hundred men : But the treason having been discovered, and the traitor punished, they met with a very different reception from what they expected, and were obliged to reembark, with the disgrace of having exposed only their own weakness, and the iniquity of their measures.

Lewis XIV., whose pride was hurt by this imprudent check, sent out d'Estrees, five years after, with eighteen ships of war, and twelve buccaneering vessels, to wipe off the stain, which, in his eyes, tarnished the glory of a reign filled with wonders. The admiral was not far from the place of his destination, when, by his rashness and obstinacy, he ran his ships aground on Davis's island ; and, after collecting the shattered remains of his fleet, returned in very bad condition to Brest, without having attempted any thing.

From this period, neither Curassou, nor the little islands of Aruba and Bonaire, which are dependent on it, have met with any disturbance. No nation has thought of seizing upon a barren spot, where they could find only a few cattle, some cassava, some vegetables proper to feed slaves, and not one article for commerce.

St. Eustatia is of very little more consequence. This island, which is about five leagues in circumference, is properly nothing but a steep mountain rising out of the sea in the form of a cone. It has no port, and is confined to a bay, which does not strictly belong to it. Some Frenchmen, who had been driven from St. Christopher's, took refuge there in 1629, and abandoned the place some time after ; because, besides the barrenness of the rock, there was no fresh water, but what they got from rain collected in cisterns. The exact time of their quitting it, is not known ; but it is certain, that in 1639, the Dutch were in possession of it. They were afterwards driven out by the English, and these by Lewis XIV., who caused his right of conquest to be recognized in the negotiation of Breda, and would not listen to the representations of the republick, with which he was then in alliance, and which pressed strongly for the restitution of this island,

as having been in possession of it before the war. When the signing of the peace had put an end to these representations, the French monarch, whose pride more readily submitted to the dictates of generosity than of justice, thought it not consistent with his dignity to take advantage of the misfortunes of his friends. He, of his own accord, restored to the Dutch their island, although he knew that it was a natural fortress, which might be of service in defending that part of St. Christopher's which belonged to him.

St. Eustatia produces some tobacco, and near six hundred thousand weight of sugar. The number of inhabitants, employed in agriculture, consists of one hundred and twenty white, and twelve hundred black people: The traders amount to about five hundred white persons, and to twelve or fifteen hundred, whenever this place has the happiness of being neuter in time of war.

Notwithstanding its weakness, it has spared some of its number to people a neighbouring island, known by the name of Saba. This is a steep rock, on the summit of which is a little ground, very proper for gardening. Frequent rains, which do not ly any time on the soil, give growth to plants of an exquisite flavour, and cabbages of an extraordinary size. Fifty European families, with about one hundred and fifty slaves here raise cotton, spin it, make stockings of it, and sell them to other colonies as high as ten crowns a pair. Throughout America, there is no blood so pure as that of Saba; the women there preserve a freshness of complexion, which is not to be found in any other of the Caribbees. Happy colony! elevated on the top of a rock, between the sky and the sea, it enjoys the benefit of both elements without dreading their storms. It breathes a pure air, lives upon vegetables, cultivates a simple commodity, from which it derives ease without the temptation of riches; is employed in a business less laborious than useful, and possesses in peace all the blessings of moderation, health, beauty, and liberty. This is the temple of peace, from whence the philosopher may contemplate at leisure the errors and passions of men, who come, like the waves of the sea, to strike

and dash themselves on the rich coasts of America, for the spoils and possession of which they are perpetually contending, and wrestling from each other: Hence may be view at a distance the nations of Europe bearing thunder in the midst of the ocean, and burning with the flames of ambition and avarice under the heats of the tropicks, devouring gold without ever being satisfied, wading through seas of blood to amass those metals, those pearls, those diamonds, which are used to adorn the oppressors of mankind; loading innumerable ships with those precious casks, which furnish luxury with purple, and from which flow pleasures, effeminacy, cruelty, and debauchery. The tranquil inhabitant of the rock of Saba views this mass of follies, and spins in peace the cotton, which constitutes all his finery and wealth.

Under the same climate lies the island of St. Martin, which is about fifteen or sixteen leagues round, and contains a considerable number of hills, which are so many rocks covered with briers. The sandy soil of its plains and vallies, which is in itself barren, can only be rendered fruitful by showers, which happen seldom, and are less beneficial in proportion as they are exhaled by the sun, or drain off from the places where they fall. With some care, these casual refreshments might be preserved in reservoirs, and distributed from thence so as to produce plenty. As to the rest, this island, which has no river, is furnished with springs and cisterns, which supply the inhabitants with very good water. The air is very wholesome, the coast abounds with fish, the sea is seldom tempestuous, and there is safe anchorage all round the island.

The Dutch and French, who met there in 1638, lived in peace, but separate from each other, when the Spaniards, who were at war with both nations, chose to attack them in their new settlement, beat them, made them prisoners, and took possession of the place themselves: But they soon grew weary of an establishment which brought no profit, and cost 400,000 livres (a) a-year. They therefore quitted it in 1648, after having destroyed every thing which they could not carry away with them.

These

(a) About 17,500 l. Sterling.

These devastations did not hinder the former possessors from returning to the island as soon as they knew that it was evacuated. They mutually agreed never to disturb each others peace, and have preserved inviolably this engagement, which was equally for the advantage of both. The disputes between their respective nations did not in the least alter these dispositions, and an uninterrupted peace reigned among them, till the year 1757, when the French were driven out by the commander of an English privateer, named Cook; but they returned again as soon as hostilities ceased.

Of about fifty thousand acres of land, which this island contains, thirty-five thousand belong to the French. This great extent would employ ten thousand persons; and it is not improbable, that the progress of cultivation may one day increase their numbers to that amount, if the rigour of our governments in Europe should give birth to liberty in America. In 1753 there were not more than one hundred and two white inhabitants, and one hundred and eighty-five slaves. Their cattle consisted of thirty-seven horses, ninety-one bulls and cows, 315 sheep, and 458 goats. For their subsistence they cultivated 17,500 banana trees, eighty-four plots of yams or potatoes, and 82,000 trenches of cassava. The produce of 425,600 feet of cotton-trees, was all they had to trade with.

The line of separation, drawn from east to west, which confines the Dutch within a smaller compass, has made them ample amends, by giving them possession of the only port in the island, and of a large salt pit, which brings them in annually (a) 600,000 livres. These republicans have, besides these, their sugar-works, which employ three thousand slaves: Their labour, however, never turns to account but in wet seasons.

Both colonies have, of late, taken up the cultivation of coffee with good success. This article may, perhaps, in time, set them above their difficulties; a prospect, which, at present, is more distant to the French than to the Dutch.

The settlements of the latter, in the great Archipelago of America, do not thus far, upon the first

view, present any thing curious or interesting. Their produce, which is scarcely sufficient to freight four or five moderate vessels, seems not worth any degree of attention; and they would accordingly have been consigned to oblivion, if some of them, which are of no consequence in cultivation, were not very considerable in commerce. This is to be understood of St. Eustatia and Curassou.

The desire of forming a contraband intercourse with the Spanish main, was the cause of the conquest of Curassou. In a short time a great number of Dutch ships arrived there: They were of force, and well equipt: Their crews consisted of choice men, whose courage was seconded by their interest. Each of them had a share in the cargo, which he was resolved to defend, at the risk of his life, against the attacks of the guardacostas.

After a time, the method of carrying on this trade was changed. Curassou itself became an immense magazine, to which the Spaniards resorted in their boats, to exchange their gold, silver, vanilla, cocoa, cochineal, bark, skins, and mules, for negroes, linens, silks, India stuffs, spices, laces, ribands, quicksilver, steel, and iron ware. These voyages, though they were constant, did not prevent a multitude of Dutch sloops making trips from their islands to the creeks on the continent. The wants, the supplies, the labours, and the voyages of the two nations were reciprocal, and made their coasts a most active scene of trade, though they were rivals in commerce, and equally covetous of gain. The modern substitution of register-ships, in the place of galleons, has made this communication less frequent; but it will be revived, and even increased, whenever, by the intervention of war, the immediate communication with the Spanish main shall be cut off.

The disputes between the courts of London and Versailles, open a new sphere of action for Curassou. At these times it furnishes provisions to all the southern coast of St. Domingo, and takes off all its produce. This trade will increase in proportion to the progress that part of the French colony shall make, and of which

which it has considerable opportunities. Even the French privateers repair in great numbers to Curassou from the Windward islands in time of hostilities, notwithstanding the distance. The reason is, that they find there, all kinds of necessary stores for their vessels; and frequently Spanish, but always European goods, which are universally used. English privateers seldom cruize in these parts.

Every commodity, without exception, that is landed at Curassou, pays one *per cent.* port-duty. Dutch goods are never taxed higher: But those that are shipped from other European ports, pay nine *per cent.* more. Foreign coffee is subject to the same tax, in order to promote the sale of that of Surinam. Every other production of America, is subject only to a payment of three *per cent.* but with an express stipulation, that they are to be conveyed directly to some port of the republick.

St. Eustatia was formerly subject to the same impositions as Curassou; but they were taken off at the beginning of the late war. It derived this benefit from its neighbourhood to the Danish island of St. Thomas, which, being a free port, engrossed a great part of its trade. Under the present regulation, its contraband trade, in time of peace, is chiefly confined to the barter of English cod, for the molasses and rum of the French islands.

A state of hostility between the courts of London and Versailles, opens a very large field to St. Eustatia; which is enriched by their divisions. In the last war it became the staple of almost all the merchandise of the French colonies, and the general magazine of supply for them. But this great operation was not conducted singly by the Dutch: Both English and French united in the harbour of this island, to form, under shelter of its neutrality, commercial engagements. A Dutch passport, which cost 252 livres (*a*), kept their connections from publick view. It was granted without ever enquiring of what nation the person was who applied for it. This great liberty gave rise to numberless

(*a*) 111. 6d.

berless transactions between persons very singularly situated with regard to each other. Thus commerce found the art of pacifying or eluding the vigilance of discord.

But the Dutch, who are equally masters of the art of converting either the good or bad fortune of others to their own profit, are not confined to the temporary advantages of a precarious trade in the New World. They are in possession of a large territory, which they cultivate, on the continent. It is separated from the French Guiana by the river Marazoni, and by that of Pommaran from Spanish Guiana; and known by the name of Surinam, the most ancient and most important settlement in the colony.

Dutch settlement at Surinam, Berbice, and Essequibé. THE foundation of it was laid in 1640, by the French, whose activity carried them at that time into a variety of climates, and whose fickleness suffered them not to settle in any. They abandoned Surinam a few years after they arrived there, and were succeeded by the Eng-

lish; whose diligence began to be attended with some success, when they were attacked in 1667 by the Dutch, who, finding them dispersed over a vast tract of land, had little difficulty in subduing them. Some years after, they were, to the number of twelve hundred, transported to Jamaica, and the colony was formally ceded to the republick.

Their subjects, whose sole occupation was commerce, had not the least taste for agriculture. Surinam was for some time a monument of the prejudices of its new masters. At length, the company, which governed the country, cut down woods, divided part of the land among the inhabitants, and furnished them with slaves. All persons who were desirous of occupying these lands, obtained grants of them, upon an engagement to pay, by instalments out of their produce, the price at which each lot was valued; and they had the farther privilege of disposing of them to any purchaser, who would agree to pay whatever part of the original debt remained due.

The

The success of these first settlements gave rise to a great number of others. By degrees they extended to twenty leagues distance from the mouth of the Surinam, and of the Commewine, which runs into it; and would have advanced much farther, if they had not been checked by the fugitive negroes, who, taking refuge in inaccessible forests, where they have recovered their liberty, are always infesting the back parts of the colony.

The difficulties which attended the clearing of these lands, required that uncommon resolution, which is ready to attempt, and that perseverance which is capable of surmounting every thing. The greatest part of the lands which were to be made fit for cultivation, were covered with water every tide, to the depth of four or five feet. By making great numbers of ditches and sluices, they succeeded in draining them; and thus the glory of setting bounds to the ocean was acquired by the Dutch in the New World, as it had been before in the Old. They contrived even to give to their plantations that neatness which is everywhere a characteristic of them, and such conveniencies as are not to be found in the most flourishing either of the English or French settlements.

One of the principal circumstances, to which they owe their success, has been the extreme ease with which the colonists procured money to carry on their works. They raised as much as they could make use of at the rate of six *per cent.* but under an express condition, that their plantations should be mortgaged to their creditors, and that they should be obliged to deliver to them their whole produce at the price current in the colony, till such time as the debt should be entirely paid off.

With the assistance of these loans, they formed upon the banks of the Surinam, or at a little distance from it, 425 plantations, upon which, in 1762, were 84,500 blacks, and 4000 white men as overseers. Among the latter, are included French refugees, Moravians, and a very considerable number of Jews. There is, perhaps, no country upon earth, where this unhappy nation is so well treated. They not only permit them

them to enjoy the exercise of their religion, the property of lands, and the determination of disputes which arise among themselves; but they suffer them likewise to participate of the common rights of citizens, to have a share in the general administration of affairs, and to vote in the elections of publick magistrates. Such is the influence of the spirit of trade, that it forces all national and religious prejudices to submit to that general interest, which should be the bond of union among mankind. What are those idle nominal distinctions of Jews, Lutherans, French or Dutch? Miserable inhabitants of a spot, which ye cultivate with so much toil and sorrow; are ye not all men? Why then do ye drive each other from a world, where ye live but for an instant? and what a life too is it, that ye have the folly and cruelty to dispute with each other the enjoyment of? Is it not sufficient, that the elements, the heavens, and even the earth, fight against you, but ye must add to those scourges, with which Nature has surrounded you, the abuse of that little strength she has left you to resist them?*

Paramabiro, the principal place in the colony of Surinam, is a small town pleasantly situated. The houses are pretty and convenient, though they are only built of wood upon a foundation of bricks, which are brought from Europe. Its port, which is five leagues distant from the sea, has every requisite that can be desired. It is the rendezvous of all ships dispatched from the metropolis to receive the produce of the colony.

The success of this establishment suggested, in 1732, the idea of forming another upon the river Berbice, which falls into the sea nineteen leagues west of the Surinam. The shores at its mouth were so marshy, that they found it necessary to go fifteen leagues up the stream in order to form plantations on its banks. It can scarcely be supposed, that a nation, that had made even the sea habitable, would yield to such an obstacle.

* Happy and wise Hollanders! the spirit of oeconomy has been better understood by you than by all the other nations of Europe. Your ambition has either stopped short, or your power has found out sure barriers against that of your neighbours. From henceforth, do not contend with them but by the example of your industry.

stacle. A new company had the glory of raising new productions in a soil taken from the bed of the sea, and the oar gave place to the plough-share.

The same prodigy has since been attempted by another association, and with the same success, on the Demerary and Essequibé, which fall into the bay at twenty leagues distance from Berbice; and upon the Pomeran, at fifteen leagues from the Essequibé, and twenty-five from the principal mouth of the Orinoko. The two last colonies will probably some time or other equal that of Surinam; but at present they do not reckon more than twelve hundred free persons there, at the head of twenty-eight, or thirty thousand slaves.

THESE three settlements produce exactly the same articles; cotton, cocoa, and sugar. Though the last of these is by far the most considerable, the quantity is not answerable either to the number of hands, or the pains they employ about it. This defect arises, no doubt, from the nature of the soil, which is too marshy, and by its superabundant humidity, drowns or washes away the vegetable salts and juices of the cane. The little profit they made of it, induced the planters to turn their thoughts to some other object; and about the beginning of this century, they took up the cultivation of the coffee-tree.

*Produce of
the three settlements.*

This tree, originally the produce of Arabia, where Nature, scantily supplying the necessities of life, scatters its luxuries with a lavish hand, was long the favourite plant of that happy land. The unsuccessful attempts made by the Europeans in the cultivation of it, induced them to believe that the inhabitants of that country steeped the fruit in boiling water, or dried it in the oven before they sold it, in order to secure to themselves a trade from which they derived all their wealth. They continued in this error, till they had conveyed the tree itself to Batavia, and afterwards to Surinam; when they were convinced by experience, that the seed of the coffee-tree, as well as of many other

ther plants, will never come to any thing, unless it is put fresh into the ground.

The fruit of this plant resembles a cherry. It grows in clusters, and is ranged along the branches under the axillæ of the leaves, of the same green as those of the laurel, but something longer. They gather it, when it comes to be of a deep red, and carry it to the mill.

The mill is composed of two wooden rollers, furnished with two plates of iron, eighteen inches long, and ten or twelve in diameter: These are moveable, and are made to approach a third, which is fixed, and which they call the chops. Above the rollers is a hopper, in which they put the coffee, from whence it falls between the rollers and the chops, where it is stript of its first skin, and divided into two parts, as may be seen by the form of it after it has undergone this operation, being flat on one side, and round on the other. From this machine it falls into a brass sieve, where the skin drops between the wires, while the fruit slides over them into baskets placed ready to receive it: It is then thrown into a vessel full of water, where it soaks for one night, and is afterwards thoroughly washed. When the whole is finished, and well dried, it is put into another machine, which is called the peeling-mill. This is a wooden grinder, which is turned vertically upon its trendle by a mule or a horse. In passing over the dried coffee, it takes off the parchment, which is nothing but a thin skin that detaches itself from the berry, in proportion as it grows dry. The parchment being removed, it is taken out of this mill to be winnowed in another, which is called the winnowing mill. This machine is provided with four pieces of tin fixed upon an axle, which is turned by a slave with considerable force; and the wind, that is made by the motion of these plates, clears the coffee of all the pellicles that are mixed with it. It is afterwards put upon a table, where the broken berries and any filth that may happen to remain, are separated by negroes. After these operations, the coffee is fit for sale.

The coffee-tree flourishes only in those climates, where the winters are extremely mild. The curious
raise

raise them only in hot-houses, where they water them frequently, and this merely for the pleasure of seeing them.

This tree delights particularly in hills and mountains, where its root is almost always dry, and its head frequently watered with gentle showers. It prefers a western aspect, and ploughed ground without any appearance of grass. The plants should be placed at eight feet distance from each other, and in holes twelve or fifteen inches deep. If left to themselves, they would rise to the height of twenty feet; but they are stunted to five, for the sake of gathering their fruit with greater ease. Thus dwarfed, they extend their branches, so that they cover the whole spot round about them.

The coffee tree blossoms in the months of December, January, and February, according to the temperature of the air, or the season for rain, and bears in October or November. It begins to yield fruit the third year, but is not in full bearing till the fifth. With the same infirmities, that most other trees are subject to, it is likewise in danger of being destroyed either by a worm, that pierces its root, or by the darting rays of the sun, which are as fatal to it as to the human species themselves. The length of its life depends upon the quality of the soil it is planted in. The hills where it is chiefly found have a gravelly or chalky bottom. In one of these it languishes for some time, and then dies; in the other, its roots, which seldom fail of striking between the stones, obtain nourishment, invigorate the trunk, and keep the tree alive and fruitful for thirty years.

This is nearly the period for plants of the coffee tree. The proprietor, at the end of this term, not only finds himself without trees, but has his land so reduced, that it is not fit for any kind of culture. One may fairly say, he has sunk his capital for an income of a very short continuance. If his situation happens to be in an island, entirely inclosed and occupied, his loss is irreparable. But upon an open and widely extensive continent, he may make himself amends for a spot totally exhausted by a tract of un-

appropriated and unbroken virgin land, which it is at his own option to clear. This advantage has contributed amazingly to multiply the coffee plantations in that part of Guiana that belongs to the Dutch.

The single colony of Surinam furnished in 1768 one hundred thousand weight of cotton, two hundred thousand of cocoa, fourteen millions of coffee, and twenty-eight millions six hundred thousand of raw sugar. Seventy ships were freighted with these commodities to bring them to the metropolis. We cannot determine with the same precision the produce of the other colonies; but we shall not be very wide of the truth in rating it at one fourth part. It may and will increase considerably. Every species of cultivation they have yet undertaken, will be extended and improved. They will, perhaps, attempt new ones; at least, they will resume that of indigo, which a few unsuccessful experiments induced them to abandon without sufficient reason.

It is true, that the coast, which is seventy-six leagues in extent, does not afford a single spot for plantation. The land throughout is low and always under water. But the great rivers, upon which they have begun to settle, and the least of which is navigable for more than thirty leagues, give a strong invitation to enterprising men to come and enrich themselves on their banks. The country that lies between these, is watered by small rivers, which are, however, large enough to carry sloops, and the soil is very fertile. The only obstacle to great success, is the climate. The year is divided between continual rains and excessive heats. Their crops, which cost them vast pains to raise, are not to be preserved without the utmost difficulty from swarms of disgusting reptiles: and the inhabitants themselves are exposed successively to the languors of the dropsy, and to fevers of every kind.

This is undoubtedly the reason which has induced the principal proprietors of Dutch Guiana to reside in Europe. There are scarcely to be found in the colony any inhabitants, but the factors of these wealthy men, and such proprietors whose fortunes are too moderate to admit of their intrusting the care of their plantations

plantations to other hands. For this reason, their consumption cannot be large: accordingly, the vessels, which are sent from the mother country to bring home the produce of these colonies, carry out nothing but absolute necessaries; at least, if there are ever any articles of luxury, it is but seldom. Even this scanty supply the Dutch traders are forced to share with the English of North America.

Those foreigners were at first admitted only because the colony was under a necessity of purchasing horses from them. The difficulty of breeding, and, perhaps, other causes, have established this permission. The bringing horses is so indispensable a passport for the men, that a ship which does not carry a number proportioned to its size, is not admitted into their harbours. But if the horses happen to die in the passage, it is sufficient that their heads are produced, which entitles the owners to expose to sale other saleable commodities, with which they may have stocked themselves in lieu of their horses. There is a law, forbidding payments to be made, otherwise than by barter of molasses and rum; but this law is little attended to. The English, who have usurped the right of carrying thither whatever they please, take care to export the most valuable commodities of the colony, and even exact payments in money or bills of exchange on Europe. Such is the law of force, which republicks apply not only to other nations, but to each other. The English treat the Dutch pretty much in the same manner as the Athenians did the people of Melos. *It has ever been the case, said they to the inhabitants of that island, that the weakest submits to the strongest: This law is not of our making; it is as old as the world, and will subsist as long as the world endures.* This argument, which is so well calculated to suit the purposes of injustice, brought Athens, in its turn, under the dominion of Sparta, and at length destroyed it by the hands of the Romans.

VARIOUS are the opinions with respect to the dangers which Dutch Guiana may be exposed to. It shall be

*Dangers to
which the
Dutch colonies
are exposed.*

our business to obtain some fixed idea on this important point. In the first instance, an invasion by any of the European powers would be easily effected. Their largest ships could enter the river Pomaran, the mouth of which has seven or eight fathom depth of water, which continually increases to forty fathom, at the distance of four or five leagues. The little fort of New Zeland, which protects the banks, could not stand the fire of their artillery for two hours. The entrance of the Demerary, which has from eighteen to twenty and twenty-four fathom of water, and has not less than fifteen or sixteen through the space of four leagues, and is totally defenceless, would be still more easy. The outlet of the Essequibé, which is three leagues in breadth, is filled with small islands and shallows; but here, as well as all along the course of the river, are found channels deep enough to bring the largest ships up to an island ten leagues distant from the sea, and defended only by a miserable redoubt. And though the river Berbice, which is one league broad, can scarcely admit the smallest vessels, they would carry sufficient force to reduce Fort Nassau, and the scattered settlements on both its banks. All the western part of Dutch Guiana is scarcely in a condition to resist the attack of an enterprising cruiser: But would infallibly be obliged to capitulate on the sight of the most contemptible squadron.

The eastern part, which, on account of its wealth, is exposed to greater danger, is better defended. The entrance of the Surinam river is not very practicable, on account of its sand banks. Ships, however, that do not draw more than twenty feet water, can come in at flood. At two leagues from its outlet, the Commewine joins the Surinam. This point of union the Dutch have principally fortified. They have erected a battery on the Surinam, another on the right bank of the Commewine, and on the left bank a citadel called Amsterdam. These works form a triangle, and their fires, which cross each other, are contrived to have the double effect of preventing ships from proceeding farther

farther up one river, and from entering into the other. The fortress is situated in the middle of a small morass, and is inaccessible except by a narrow causeway entirely commanded by the artillery. It requires no more than eight or nine hundred men to garrison it completely. It is flanked with four bastions, and surrounded with a mud rampart, a wide ditch full of water, and a good covered way: For the rest, it is unprovided with powder magazines, has no vaults, nor any kind of casemate. Three leagues higher up on the Surinam is a close battery, intended to cover the harbour and town of Parambiro. It is called Fort Zeland. A battery of the same kind, which they call Sommeswelt Fort, covers the Commewine at nearly the same distance. The forces of the colony consist of its militia and twelve hundred regulars, one half of whose pay is supplied by the inhabitants, and the other by the company.

This number of men would be more than sufficient, if they had nothing to guard against but the efforts of the natives. The few savages who endeavoured to keep possession of places that suited the Dutch, have been exterminated; the rest kept retreating farther into the inland parts, in proportion as they found the Europeans encroaching upon them; and live quietly in those woods, which, by serving them as an asylum, are become as dear to them as the country from which they have been driven.

But the colony has not the same degree of security with respect to the negroes. When these miserable creatures, who are brought from Africa, are exposed to sale, they are placed one after another upon a table, and examined with the most minute attention of a surgeon employed by the government. According to his report, the prices of them are settled, and the money is usually paid at the end of three weeks. The purchaser, however, has four and twenty hours allowed him to judge from his own observation, of the goodness of his bargain. If within that time he is dissatisfied with the choice he has made, he has a right to return what he has taken, without any ceremony or indemnification; provided he has not set his seal upon them.

them. This seal is a silver plate on which are engraved the initials of his christian and surname: After heating it, they apply it to the arm or breast of the slave, and the marks thus burned in, can never be effaced. The use of this barbarous practice is, to enable them to distinguish those whose features are not sufficiently characterised for European eyes.

Nothing is more uncommon in the Dutch settlements than to see a slave made free. He cannot obtain his liberty but by becoming a Christian; and before they are authorised to administer baptism to him, they must purchase letters of freedom, which cost four hundred livres (*a*). Security must also be given for his maintenance during life, lest he should become a burthen to the company, or should be induced to increase the number of the enemies of the colony, which is already too great. When we add to all these expences the loss of the original purchase-money, we may safely venture to conclude, that the franchisement of a slave cannot be common among a people with whom avarice is the ruling, if not the only, passion.

The planters here are so far from giving way to these acts of humanity, that they have carried oppression to infinitely greater lengths than it has been extended to in the islands. The opportunities of desertion on a continent of immense extent, is, probably, the cause of this extraordinary barbarity towards the blacks. Upon the slightest suspicion, a slave is put to death by his master, in the presence of all his companions; but this is done without the knowledge of the white people, who might give evidence against them for so flagrant a breach of the rights of society. The blacks not being admitted to give testimony, are of no sort of consequence. The metropolis winks at this cruelty, and, by its shameful connivance, risks the loss of an useful settlement. They have frequently had the strongest reason to be apprehensive of a revolution; but the danger was never so great, nor so imminent, as in 1763.

In the month of February 1763, an insurrection broke out, which, by its example and consequences, might

(a) 17l. 10s.

might have produced the most fatal effects throughout the American settlements. Seventy-three blacks assembled in one house at Berbice, suddenly murdered their master, and set about the cry of liberty. At this sound, courage and hope revived, and animated the whole body of slaves. They joined to the number of nine thousand, and in the first transports of their rage fell upon all the white people in their way; these, with the chief of the colony, were obliged to take refuge on board a brigantine at the lower part of the river. In the meantime, five hundred men arrived from Surinam to their assistance. They made an attempt to land, and intrenched themselves in an advantageous post, till the arrival of some troops from Europe.

Happily for the republick, the English at Barbadoes, who are in possession of most of the plantations formed on the Poumaran, Demerary, and Essequibé, sent in time a sufficient force to keep the slaves on these three rivers in order; and, by a still more fortunate occurrence, the people at Surinam, at this very time, concluded a treaty they had on foot with the negroes who had taken refuge in the neighbouring woods. Ignorant, as they probably were, of a commotion, which might have been so favourable to them, they consented not to receive among them any fugitives of their own nation. This stipulation deprived the rebels of their principal resource; and by such a combination of unexpected events, they were reduced again to a state of servitude. The greatest part of them being without arms, they eagerly embraced the offer of a capitulation with their masters. They have, however, given proofs of that inextinguishable principle prevailing in their souls, which never fails to resist oppression. The tranquillity of Dutch Guiana, like that of all other countries, where rebellions have once broke out, is more apparent than real. The seeds of revolution are ripening in secret within the forests of Auka and Samaca.

In these deserts, which are peopled with all the slaves who have fled from the yoke of the covetous Dutchmen, a species of republick has grown up, composed
of

of fifteen or sixteen thousand inhabitants, divided into several villages, each of which chooses a chief for itself. These wandering clans fall unexpectedly sometimes upon one side of the colony, sometimes upon another, in order to carry off supplies for their own subsistence, and to lay waste the wealth of their former tyrants. It is in vain that the troops are kept continually upon the watch, to check or to surprise so dangerous an enemy. By means of private information, they contrive to escape every snare, and direct their march to those parts which happen to be left defenceless. Conventions and treaties are no security against their attacks.

It seems as if one beheld the people enslaved by Egypt, who having taken refuge in the deserts of Arabia, wandered during forty years, infesting and harassing the neighbouring nations, and making encroachments upon them one after another, till at last, by frequently repeating their desultory incursions, they paved the way for the invasion of Palestine. If Nature ever chance to form a mighty soul within a black body, an intrepid head under the cover of a negro's wool; if some European or other ever aspire at the renown of becoming the avenger of nations trampled upon for two centuries; if even any missionary happen to avail himself of the continual and progressive prevalence of belief against the fluctuating and transient empire of force; if ever——But let me ask—Must our barbarous European policy prompt us to thirst after the blood and destruction of that equitable and benevolent person whose crime is a project for establishing universal peace and felicity among mankind?

*Reasons why
the Dutch
ought to secure
the possession of
their colonies,
and to encourage
the produce of them.*

It depends, however, upon the wisdom and moderation of these very republicans, who have rendered the load of servitude so oppressive to the negroes, to prevent a general revolution, of which they would be the first victims. The Dutch have already been guilty of great oversights. They have not bestowed upon their American settlements that attention they deserved, although they have met
with

with strokes so severe, and so closely following upon each other, as ought to have opened their eyes. If they had not been blinded by the rapidity of their success, they would have discovered the beginning of their ruin in the loss of Brazil. Stripped of that vast acquisition, which in their hands might have become the first colony of the universe, and might have atoned for the weakness or insufficiency of their territory in Europe, they saw themselves reduced to the condition they were in before they made this conquest, of being factors for other nations; and thus was created, in their mass of real wealth, a void which hath never since been filled up.

The consequences of the navigation-act, passed in England, were not less fatal to the Dutch. Since that time, that island, ceasing to be tributary to the trade of the republick, became her rival, and in a short time acquired a decisive superiority over her in Africa, Asia, and America.

Had other nations adopted the policy of Britain, Holland must have sunk under the stroke. Happily for her, their kings knew not, or cared not, for the prosperity of their people. Every government, however, in proportion as it has become more enlightened, has assumed to itself its own branches of commerce. Each step that has been taken for this purpose, has been an additional check upon the Dutch; and we may presume, from the present state of things, that, sooner or later, every people will establish a navigation for themselves, suited to the nature of their country, and to the extent of their abilities. To this period the course of events in all nations seems to tend; and, whensoever it shall arrive, the Dutch, who are indebted for their success as much to the indolence and ignorance of their neighbours, as to their own oeconomy and experience, will find themselves reduced to their original state of poverty.

It is not certainly in the power of human prudence to prevent this revolution; but there was no necessity to anticipate it, as the republick has done, by choosing to interfere as a principal, in the troubles which have so frequently agitated Europe. The interested policy
of

of our times would have afforded a sufficient excuse for the wars she has commenced or sustained for the sake of her trade. But upon what principle can she justify those in which her exorbitant ambition, or ill-founded apprehensions, have engaged her? She has been obliged to support herself by immense loans: If we sum up together all the debts separately contracted by the states-general, the provinces, and the towns, which are all equally publick debts, we shall find they amount to 2,000,000,000 livres (*a*); the interest of which, though reduced to two and a half *per cent.* has amazingly increased the load of taxes.

I shall leave it to others to examine whether these taxes have been laid on with judgment, and collected with due œconomy. It is sufficient here to remark, that they have had the effect of increasing so considerably the prices of necessaries, and consequently that of labour, that the industrious part of the nation have suffered severely from them. The manufactures of wool, silk, gold, silver, and a variety of others, have sunk, after having struggled for a long time under the growing weight of taxes and scarcity. When the spring equinox brings on at the same time high tides and the melting of the snow, a country is laid under water by the overflowing of the rivers. No sooner does the increase of taxes raise the price of provisions, than the workman, who pays more for his daily consumption, without receiving any addition to his wages, forsakes the manufacture and workshop. Holland has not preserved any of its internal resources of trade, but such as were not exposed to the competition of other nations.

The husbandry of the republick, if we may be allowed to call it by that name, that is to say, the herring fishery, has scarcely suffered less. This fishery, which, for a long time, was entitled the golden mine of the state, on account of the number of persons who derived their subsistence, and even grew rich by it, is not only reduced to one half, but the profits of it, as well as those of the whale-fishery, are dwindled by degrees to nothing. Nor is it by advances of cash, that those who support these two fisheries, embark in the undertaking.

The

(*a*) 87,500,000 l.

The partnerships consist of merchants, who furnish the bottoms, the rigging, the utensils, and the stores. Their profit consists almost entirely in the sale of these several merchandises: They are paid for them out of the produce of the fishery, which seldom yields more than is sufficient to defray its expences. The impossibility there is in Holland of employing their numerous capitals to better advantage, has been the only cause of preserving the remains of this ancient source of the publick prosperity.

The excessive taxes, which have ruined the manufactures of the republick, and reduced the profits of their fisheries so low, has greatly confined their navigation. The Dutch have the materials for building at the first hand. They seldom cross the sea without a cargo. They live with the strictest sobriety. The lightness of their ships in working, is a great saving in the numbers of their crews; and these crews are easily formed, and always kept in the greatest perfection, and at a small expence, from the multitude of sailors swarming in a country which consists of nothing else but sea and shore. Notwithstanding so many advantages, which are farther increased by the low rate of money, they have been forced to share the carrying trade of Europe with Sweden, Denmark, and especially the Hamburgers, with whom the necessary requisites for navigation are not incumbered with the same impositions.

With the freights have diminished the commissions which used to be sent to the United Provinces. When Holland became a great staple, merchandise was sent thither from all parts, as to the market, where the sale of them was most ready, sure, and advantageous. Foreign merchants were therefore ready oftentimes to send them thither, as they obtained, at an easy rate, credit to the amount of two-thirds, or even three-fourths, of the value of their goods. This management insured to the Dutch the double advantage, of employing their capitals without risk, and gaining commission besides. The gains of commerce were at that time so considerable, that they could easily bear these charges: They are now so greatly lessened,
since

since experience has multiplied the number of adventurers, that the seller is obliged to conduct his commodity himself to the consumer, without the intervention of any intermediate agent. But if, upon certain occasions, an agent must be employed, they will prefer, *cæteris paribus*, Hamburgh, where commodities pay a duty only of one *per cent.* for import and export, to Holland, where they pay five.

The republick hath lost likewise the trade of insurance, which she had in a manner formerly monopolized. It was in her ports that all the nations of Europe used to insure their freights, to the great profit of the insurers, who, by dividing and multiplying their risks, seldom failed of enriching themselves. In proportion as the spirit of inquiry introduced itself into all our ideas, whether of philosophy or œconomy, the utility of these speculations became universally known. The practice became familiar and general; and what other nations gained by it, was of course lost to Holland.

From these observations it is evident, that all the branches of commerce the republick was in possession of, have suffered considerable diminution. Perhaps the greater part of them would have been annihilated, if the extent of her credit, and her extraordinary œconomy, had not enabled her to be satisfied with a profit of no more than three *per cent.* which we look upon to be the value of the product upon all her trade. The deficiency has been made up to them by vesting their money in the English, French, Austrian, Saxon, Danish, and even Russian funds, the amount of which, upon the whole, is about 1,600,000,000 of livres (a).

This branch of commerce, which was formerly prohibited, is now become the most considerable of any. Had the law been observed, the sums they have lent to foreigners would have lain unemployed at home; their capitals for the use of trade being already so large, that the least addition to them, so far from giving an advantage, would become detrimental, by making the amount too great for use. The superfluity would immediately have brought the United Provinces to that period, in which excess of wealth be-

gets

(a) 70,000,000*l.*

gets poverty. Millions of opulent persons, in the midst of their pleasures, would not have had wherewithal to support themselves.

The contrary practice has been the principal resource of the republick. The money she has lent to neighbouring nations, has procured her an annual balance in her favour, by the revenue accruing from it. The credit is always the same, and produces always the same interest.

We shall not presume to determine how long the Dutch will continue to enjoy so comfortable a situation. Experience authorises us only to declare, that all governments, which have, unfortunately for the people, adopted the detestable system of borrowing, will sooner or later be forced to give it up; and the abuse they have made of it, will most probably oblige them to defraud their creditors. Whenever the republick shall be reduced to this state, her great resource will be in agriculture.

This, though it is capable of improvement in the country of Breda, Bois-le-Duc, Zutphen, and Gueldres, can never become very considerable. The territory belonging to the United Provinces is so small, that it will almost justify the opinion of a Sultan, who, seeing with what obstinacy the Dutch and Spaniards disputed with each other the possession of it, declared, if it belonged to him, he would order his pioneers to throw it into the sea. The soil is good for nothing but fish, which, before the Dutch, were the only inhabitants of it. It has been said, with as much truth as energy, that the four elements were but in embryo there. The produce of the lands will never be sufficient to maintain one fourth part of the two millions that inhabit it at this time. It cannot, therefore, be by her European possessions, that the republick can expect to be preserved. She may depend with more reason upon those in America.

The countries she holds in that part of the world, are all of them under the influence of monopolies. Her islands, as well as her factories in Africa, depend upon the West-India company, the credit of which, since

the loss of Brazil, has sunk so prodigiously, that their stock sells at near sixty *per cent.* under par.

Surinam, which was taken by some privateers fitted out in Zeland, was ceded by the states of that province to the same company, who having still their imagination filled with the idea of their ancient grandeur, undertook, without hesitation, the management of that territory. Upon serious reflection they found that the expence which was necessary to put it in a state to yield them any advantage, was far too great for their exhausted finances. They gave up a third of their property to the city of Amsterdam, and another third to an opulent individual of the name of Daarssens. The two other colonies on the continent are likewise under the controul of trading companies, to which they owe their foundation.

Not one of these societies is in possession of a single ship, nor carries on any sort of trade. The navigation to the American settlements is equally open to every member of the community, under this whimsical and oppressive condition, however, that every ship bound for Surinam and Berbice, shall sail from Amsterdam; and those for Essequibé from Zeland, and that they shall return to the same ports from which they sailed. The business of the companies is confined to the government, and the defence of the territories submitted to their jurisdiction; and to enable them to support these expences, the republick authorises them to impose taxes of different kinds.

All commodities imported into the colonies, or exported from them, pay large duties. Slaves, on their arrival, are subject to much larger. There is a poll-tax upon blacks and whites from the age of three years. None but foreigners are exempted from this shameful tribute; and this exemption is not taken off but by a residence of more than ten years. When an estate is transferred, both the seller and the purchaser are subject to a considerable fine. Every manufacturer, be his industry ever so great, is obliged to give in an account of his gains upon oath, and the impost is regulated agreeable to the amount of his profits. After the publick expences are defrayed, the remainder of
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the revenue, which the weakness or corruption of the sovereign power has suffered to become too exorbitant, is divided among the members of the different companies.

Every wise government has discovered the ill effects of leaving their American possessions in the hands of particular societies, whose private interests do not always coincide with that of the publick. They have considered, that their subjects in the New World, as well as those in the Old, have a right to be governed, not by partial, but by general laws. They have been of opinion, that their colonies would make a more rapid progress under the immediate protection of the state, than under that of an intermediate agent. The event has demonstrated, more or less, in all cases, the justness of these reflections. Holland is the only power which has not adopted so simple and rational a plan; though every circumstance concurred to make it more necessary to her than to other states.

Her settlements are without any defence against enemies, which either ambition or revenge may raise up against her; and are in continual danger of insurrections, from the cruelty with which the slaves are treated. Their productions, all of which ought to be carried home to the mother country, are every day smuggled into foreign colonies in North-America. The disinclination, which a people, merely commerical, naturally have to the improvement of land, is heightened in the colonies by the abuses inseparable from the form of government established there. The means of creating a new arrangement in them, are not within the reach of the authority, protection, or activity of a private society. Revolutions of such magnitude cannot be brought about but by the immediate superintendence of the state.

If the republick adopts the resolution which her dearest interests require, she will cease to depend solely for her existence upon a precarious industry, some branches of which she is every day losing, and which, sooner or later, she will lose entirely. Her colonies, which are in possession of all the advantages that a mercantile and landed nation can desire, will furnish pro-

ductions, the whole profits and property of which will centre in her. By her territorial acquisitions she will be enabled in every market to rival those nations, whose commodities she formerly served only to convey. In a word, Holland will cease to be a warehouse, and become a nation. She will find in America that stability which Europe has denied her. It remains to see, if Denmark, the only northern power that has extended its trade and sovereignty into the New World, has any reasonable foundation to conceive hopes of aggrandizing itself by them.

Danish settlements at St. Thomas, St. John, and Santa Cruz.

DENMARK and Norway, which are at present united under the same government, formed in the eighth century two different states. While the former signalized itself by the conquest of England, and other bold enterprises, the latter peopled the Orcades, Fero, and Iceland. Urged by that restless spirit, which had always actuated their ancestors the Scandinavians, this active nation, so early as the ninth century, formed an establishment in Greenland, which country, there is good reason to suppose, is attached to the continent of America. It is even thought, notwithstanding the darkness which prevails over all the historical records of the north, that there are sufficient traces to induce a belief, that their navigators in the eleventh century were hardy enough to penetrate as far as the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland, and that they left some small colonies on them. Hence it is probable that the Norwegians have a right to dispute with Columbus the glory of having discovered the New World; at least, if those may be said to have made the discovery who were there without knowing it.

The wars which Norway had to sustain, till the time it became united to Denmark; the difficulties which the government opposed to its navigation; the state of oblivion and inaction into which this enterprising nation fell, not only occasioned the loss of its colonies in Greenland, but also whatever settlements or connections it might have had on the coasts of America.

It

It was not till more than a century after the Genoese navigator had begun the conquest of that part of the world under the Spanish banner, that the Danes and Norwegians, who were then become one nation, cast their eyes upon that hemisphere, which was nearer to them than to any of those nations, who had already possessed themselves of different parts of it. They chose, however, to make their way into it by the shortest course; and therefore, in 1619, sent Captain Munk to find out a passage by the north-west into the Pacific ocean. His expedition was attended with as little success as those of many other navigators, both before and after him.

It may be presumed, that a disappointment in their first attempt would not entirely have discouraged the Danes; and that they would have continued their American expeditions till they had succeeded in forming some settlements, that might have rewarded them for their trouble. If they lost sight of those distant regions, it was, because they were forced to it by wars in Europe, which their imprudence as well as their weakness had brought upon them. Successive losses reduced them to a desperate state, from which they would never have recovered, had not the assistance of Holland, and the steady perseverance of the citizens of Copenhagen, procured them a peace in 1660, less humiliating and less destructive than they had reason to fear.

The government seized the first moment of tranquillity to probe the wounds of the state. Like all other Gothic governments, it was divided between an elective chief, the nobility or senate, and the commons. The king enjoyed no other pre-eminence than that of presiding in the senate, and commanding the army. In the intervals between the Diets, the government was in the hands of the senate: But all great affairs were referred to the Diets themselves, which were composed of the clergy, nobility, and commonalty.

Though this constitution is formed upon the model of liberty, no country was less free than that of Denmark. The clergy had lost all their influence from the time of the Reformation. The burgeses had not

yet acquired wealth sufficient to make themselves considerable. These two orders were overwhelmed by that of the nobility, which was still influenced by the original feudal spirit, that reduces every thing to force. The critical situation of the affairs of Denmark did not inspire this body of men with that justice or moderation which the circumstances of the time required. They refused to contribute their proportion to the publick expences, and, by this refusal, exasperated the other members of the Diet. In the excess of their resentment, the latter invested the king with an absolute, unlimited power; and the nobles, who had driven them to this act of desperation, found themselves obliged to follow their example.

After this revolution, the most imprudent, and the most singular that ever occurred in the annals of history, the Danes fell into a lethargy. To those great convulsions, which are occasioned by the clashing of important rights, succeeded the delusive tranquillity of servitude. A nation, which had filled the scene for several ages, appeared no more on the theatre of the world. In 1671, it just recovered so far from the trance, into which the access of despotism had thrown it, as to look abroad, and take possession of a little American island, known by the name of St. Thomas.

This island, the farthest of the Carribbees, towards the west, was totally uninhabited, when the Danes undertook to form a settlement upon it. They were at first opposed by the English, under pretence that some emigrants of that nation had formerly begun to clear it. The British ministry stopt the progress of this interference; and the colony was left to form plantations of sugar, such as a sandy soil, of no greater extent than five leagues in length, and two and a half in breadth, would admit of.

So small a cultivation would never have given any importance to the island of St. Thomas; but the sea has hollowed out from its coast an excellent harbour, in which fifty ships may ride with security. So signal an advantage attracted both the English and French Buccaneers, who were desirous of exempting their
booty

booty from the duties they were subject to pay in the settlements belonging to their own nations. Whenever they had taken their prizes in their lower latitudes, from which they could not make the windward islands, they put into that of St. Thomas to dispose of them. It was also the asylum of all merchant ships which frequented it as a neutral port in time of war. It was the mart, where the neighbouring colonies bartered their respective commodities, which they could not do elsewhere with so much ease and safety. It was the port from which they continually dispatched vessels richly laden to carry on a clandestine trade with the Spanish coasts, in return for which they brought back considerable quantities of metal, and merchandises of great value. In a word, St. Thomas was a market of very great consequence.

Denmark, however, reaped no advantage from this rapid circulation. The persons who enriched themselves were foreigners, who carried their wealth to other countries. The metropolis had no other communication with its colony, than by a single ship, sent out annually to Africa to purchase slaves, which being sold in America, the ship returned home laden with the productions of that country. In 1719, their traffick increased by the clearing of the island of St. John, which is adjacent to St. Thomas, but not half so large. These slender beginnings would have required the addition of Crab Island, or Bourriquen, where they had attempted to form a settlement two years before.

In this island, which is from eight to ten leagues in circumference, there are a considerable number of hills; but they are neither barren, steep, nor very high. The soil of the plains and vallies which run between them, seems to be very fruitful; and it is watered by a number of springs, the water of which is said to be excellent. Nature, at the same time that she has denied it a harbour, has made it amends by a multitude of the finest bays that can be conceived. One can scarce stir a step without finding some remains of plantations, rows of orange and lemon trees, which make it evident, that the Spaniards of Porto-Rico, who are
not

not farther distant than five or six leagues, had formerly settled there.

The English, observing that so promising an island was without inhabitants, began to raise some plantations there towards the end of the last century; but they had not time to reap the fruit of their labour. They were surprised by the Spaniards, who barbarously murdered all the men, and carried off the women and children to Porto-Rico. This accident did not deter the Danes from making some attempts to settle there in 1717. But the subjects of Great-Britain reclaiming their ancient rights, sent thither some adventurers, who were at first plundered, and soon after driven off by the Spaniards. The jealousy of these American tyrants extends, even to the prohibiting of fishing boats, to approach any shore where they have a right of possession, though they do not exercise it. Too idle to prosecute cultivation, and too suspicious to admit industrious neighbours, they condemn the Crab Island to eternal solitude; they will neither inhabit it themselves, nor suffer any other nation to inhabit it. Such an exertion of exclusive sovereignty, has obliged Denmark to give up this island for that of Santa Cruz.

This island had a better title to become an object of national ambition. It is eighteen leagues in length, and from three to four in breadth. In 1643 it was inhabited by the Dutch and English. Their rivalry in trade soon made them enemies to each other. In 1646, after an obstinate and bloody engagement, the Dutch were beat, and obliged to quit a spot from which they had formed great expectations. The conquerors were employed in securing the consequences of their victory; when, in 1650, they were attacked and driven out in their turn by twelve hundred Spaniards, brought over thither in five ships. The triumph of these lasted but a few months. The remains of that numerous body, who were left for the defence of the island, surrendered, without resistance, to a hundred and sixty French, who had embarked from St. Christopher's, to make themselves masters of the island.

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These new inhabitants lost no time to make themselves acquainted with a country so much in request. In a soil, in other respects excellent, they found only one river of a moderate size, which gliding gently almost on a level with the sea, through a flat country, furnished only a brackish water. Two or three springs, which they found in the innermost parts of the island, made but feeble amends for this defect. The ponds were for the most part dry. The construction of reservoirs required time. Nor was the climate more inviting to the new inhabitants. The island being flat, and covered with old trees, scarcely afforded an opportunity for the winds to carry off the poisonous vapours, with which its morasses clogged the atmosphere. There was but one remedy for this inconvenience, which was, to burn the woods. The French set fire to them without delay; and, getting on board their ships, became spectators from the sea, for several months, of the conflagration they had raised in the island. As soon as the flames were extinguished, they went on shore again.

They found the soil fertile beyond belief. Tobacco, cotton, arnotto, indigo, and sugar, flourished equally in it. So rapid was the progress of this colony, that in eleven years from its commencement, there were upon it eight hundred and twenty-two white persons, with a proportionable number of slaves. It was rising, by hasty strides, to a degree of prosperity, which would have eclipsed the most flourishing settlements of the French nation, when such obstacles were thrown in the way of its activity as made its motions retrograde. Its decay was as sudden as its rise. In 1696, there were no more than one hundred and forty-seven white people, men, women, and children, and six hundred and twenty-three blacks remaining; and these were transported from thence to St. Domingo.

Writers, who take it for granted, that the court of Versailles is always governed in its decisions by the most comprehensive views of profound policy, have supposed, that the neglect of Santa Cruz was the result of a determination to abandon the small islands, in order to unite all the strength, industry, and population

lation in the large ones. But this is a mistaken notion. The resolution did not take its rise from the court, but from the farmers of the revenues, who found, that the contraband trade of Santa Cruz with St. Thomas was detrimental to their interests. The spirit of finance has in all times been injurious to commerce; it has destroyed the womb in which it was bred. Santa Cruz continued without inhabitants, and without cultivation, till 1733, when it was sold by France to Denmark for 738,000 livres (*a*).

Conduct of Denmark towards its islands.

THIS northern power seemed likely to take deep root in America. Unfortunately, she laid her plantations under the yoke of exclusive privileges. Industrious people of all sects, particularly Moravians, strove in vain to overcome this great difficulty. Many attempts were made to reconcile the interests of the colonists and their oppressors, but without success. The two parties kept up a continual struggle of animosity, not of industry. At length the government, with a moderation not to be expected from its constitution, purchased, in 1754, the privileges and effects of the company. The price was fixed at 9,900,000 livres (*b*), part of which was paid down, and the remainder in bills upon the treasury, bearing interest. From this time, the navigation to the islands was opened to all the subjects of the Danish dominions.

The rapaciousness of the treasury unluckily prevented the advantage which this arrangement would otherwise have produced. Indeed the national productions and merchandise, in short, whatever they could draw from the first hand, and put on board Danish vessels, were to be shipped from the metropolis, free of all duties; but for all manufactures that did not fall under these descriptions, they demanded a tax of four *per cent*. All imports into the colonies paid five *per cent*. and all exports, six. Of American productions, what was consumed in the metropolis, had two and a half

(*a*) 32,287 L 10 s.

(*b*) 433,125 L.

per

per cent. laid upon it, and what was carried to foreign markets had one.

At the same time that the trade to the islands recovered its natural independence, at the expence of these burthenfome restrictions, that to Africa, which is the basis of it, was likewise laid open. The government had, above a century before, purchased of the king of Aquambou the two forts of Fredericksburg and Christiansburg, situated on the Gold Coast, at a small distance from each other. The company, in virtue of its charter, had the sole possession of them; and exercised its privileges with that barbarity, of which the politest European nations have set the example in these devoted climates. Only one of its agents had the resolution to renounce those cruelties, which custom had given a sanction to. So great was the reputation of his humanity, and the confidence reposed in his probity, that the blacks would come from the distance of an hundred leagues to see him. The sovereign of a distant country sent his daughter to him with presents of gold and slaves, that Schilderop (for so this European, thus revered through all the coasts of Nigritia, was called) might give him a grandson. O virtue! still dost thou exist in the souls of these wretched beings, condemned to dwell with tygers, or groan beneath the yoke of their own species! They yet have hearts susceptible of the soft impressions of humanity and beneficence! Just and virtuous Dane! What monarch ever received so pure, so glorious an homage, as thy nation has seen thee enjoy? And where? Upon a sea, upon a continent degraded forever by an infamous traffick of crimes and misfortunes, carried on through two centuries; of men exchanged for arms, and children sold by their parents. We cannot sufficiently lament such horrors; and if we could, our lamentations would be useless.

The exclusive privilege of purchasing negroes, has, however, been abolished in Denmark, as in other states. All the subjects of this commercial nation are permitted to buy men in Africa. They pay only eighteen livres (a) a head for every one they carry in-

to

(a) 15 s. 9 d.

to America. Thirty thousand slaves, including all ages and each sex, are employed already in their plantations, on which a poll-tax is laid of four livres ten sols (a). The produce of the labours of these unhappy men loads forty vessels, from one hundred and twenty to three hundred tons burthen. The plantations, which pay to the treasury an annual rent of nine livres (b) for every thousand feet square, furnish to the mother country a little coffee and ginger; some wood for inlaying; eight hundred bales of cotton, which are chiefly carried to foreign markets, and fourteen millions weight of raw sugar, four fifths of which are consumed in the metropolis, and the rest is sold in the Baltic, or introduced into Germany by the way of Altena. Santa Cruz, though the most modern of all the Danish settlements, furnishes five sevenths of this produce.

This island is divided into three hundred and fifty plantations, by lines which intersect each other at right angles. Each plantation contains one hundred and fifty acres, of forty thousand square feet each; so that it may occupy a space of twelve hundred feet in length, by eight hundred in breadth. Two thirds of this land are fit for the growth of sugar, and the proprietor may occupy fourscore acres at a time, each of which will yield, one year with another, sixteen quintals of sugar, without reckoning the molasses. The remainder may be employed in other less lucrative cultivations. When the island comes to be entirely cleared, which depends upon times and circumstances, some towns may be built upon it: at present, it has only the village of Christianstadt, built under the fort, which defends the principal harbour.

Reasons why Denmark ought to appropriate to herself the produce of all her islands.

DENMARK cannot be ignorant, that the riches which begin to flow from her colonies, do not belong entirely to herself. A great part goes to the English and Dutch, who, without living upon the islands, have formed the best plantations in them. Now

England supplies them with wood, cattle, and meal, and receives

(a) About 4 s.

(b) 7 s. 10½ d.

receives in exchange molasses and other commodities. They are obliged likewise to import their wines, linens, and silks. Even India is concerned in this trade, for the company have consigned there a considerable quantity of their goods. Upon a strict calculation, perhaps, it might appear, that what remains to the proprietors, after the commission, freight, and duties are paid, is a very insignificant share. The situation of Denmark does not admit of her looking with indifference upon such a disadvantage. Every thing conspires to induce her to take proper measures for securing to herself the entire profits of her American possessions.

The Danish territories in Europe were formerly independent of each other. Revolutions of a singular nature have united them into one kingdom. In the centre of this heterogeneous composition, are some islands, the principal of which is called Zeland. It has an excellent port, which in the eleventh century was but a little fishing town; it became a place of importance in the thirteenth century; in the fifteenth, the capital of the kingdom; and since the fire in 1728, which consumed sixteen hundred and fifty houses, a handsome city. To the south of these islands is that long and narrow peninsula, which the ancients called the Cimbric Chersonesus. Jutland, Sleswick, and Holstein, the most important and extensive parts of this peninsula, have been successively added to the Danish dominions. They have been more or less flourishing, in proportion as they have felt the effects of the instability of the ocean, which sometimes retires from their coasts, and sometimes overwhelms them. In these countries, as well as in those of Oldenburgh and Delmenhorst, which are subject to the same power, one may see a perpetual struggle between the inhabitants and the sea, so well sustained on each part, that the success has always been equal. The inhabitants of such a country will be free, from the moment they feel their slavery. Mariners, islanders, and mountaineers, will not long remain under the disgrace of servitude.

Nor is Norway, which constitutes part of the Danish dominions, more adapted to servitude. It is covered with stones or rocks, and intersected by chains of barren mountains. Lapland contains only a few wild people, either settled upon the sea coasts, for the sake of fishing, or wandering through frightful deserts, and subsisting by the chase, by their furs, and their reindeer. Iceland is a miserable country, which has been many times overturned by volcanoes and earthquakes, and conceals within its bowels a quantity of combustible matter, which in an instant may reduce it to a heap of ashes. With respect to Greenland, which the common people believe to be an island, and which geographers consider as united towards the west to the American continent, it is a vast and barren country, condemned by Nature to be eternally covered with snow. If ever these countries should become populous, they would be independent of each other, and of the king of Denmark, who thinks at present that he rules over their wild inhabitants, because he calls himself their king, while they know nothing of the matter.

The climate of the Danish islands in Europe, is not so severe as might be conjectured, from the latitude they ly in. If the navigation of the gulfs which surround them, is sometimes interrupted, it is not so much by ice formed there, as by what is driven thither by the winds, and by degrees collects into a mass. All the provinces which make part of the German continent, except Jutland, partake of the German temperature. The cold is very moderate even on the coasts of Norway. It rains there often during the winter, and the port of Bergen is scarcely once in a year shut up by ice, while that of Amsterdam, Lubec, and Hamburgh, is shut up ten times. It is true, that this advantage is dearly purchased by thick and constant fogs, which make Denmark a disagreeable and melancholy residence, and its inhabitants gloomy and low-spirited.

The population of this empire is not proportioned to its extent. In the earlier ages it was ruined by continual emigrations. The piratical enterprises, which succeeded these, kept their numbers from increasing;

creasing; and a total want of order and government put it out of their power to remedy evils of such magnitude and importance. The double tyranny of the prince over one order of his subjects, who fancy themselves to be free, under the title of nobles, and of the nobility over a people entirely deprived of liberty, extinguishes even the hopes of an increase of population. The bills of mortality of all the states of Denmark, excepting Iceland, taken together, make the deaths in 1771 amount only to 55,125; so that upon the calculation of thirty-two living to one dead person, the whole number of inhabitants does not amount to more than 1,764,000.

The weight of imposts, independent of many other causes, is a great obstacle to their prosperity. There are fixed taxes payable on land, arbitrary ones collected by way of capitation, and daily ones levied on consumption. This oppression is the more unjust, as the crown possesses a very considerable domain, and has likewise a certain resource in the straits of the Sound. Six thousand nine hundred and thirty ships, which, if we may judge from the accounts of the year 1768, annually pass into, or out of the Baltic, pay at the entrance of that sea about one *per cent.* upon all the commodities they are laden with. This species of tribute, which though difficult to raise, brings in to the state 2,500,000 livres (z), is received in the bay of Elfsneur, under the guns of the castle of Cronenburg. It is astonishing, that the situation of this bay and that of Copenhagen, should not have suggested the idea of forming a staple here, where all the commercial nations of the north and south might meet, and exchange the produce of their climates and their industry.

With the funds arising from tributes, domains, customs, and foreign subsidies, this state maintains an army of twenty-five thousand men, which is composed entirely of foreigners, and passes for the very worst militia in Europe. On the other hand, its fleet is in the highest reputation. It consists of thirty-two ships

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of

(z) 109,375 l.

of the line, fifteen or sixteen frigates, and some galleys, the use of which, though wisely prohibited in other parts, cannot be avoided on the coasts of the Baltic, which are for the most part inaccessible to vessels of other kinds. Twenty-four thousand registered seamen, most of whom are continually employed, form a certain resource for their navy. To their military expences, the government has of late years added others, for the encouragement of manufactures and arts. If we add to these 4,000,000 livres (*a*) for the necessary expences and amusements of the court, and about the same sum for the interest of the national debt, amounting to about 70,000,000 (*b*), we shall account for the disposition of about 23,000,000 livres (*c*), which form the revenue of the crown.

If it was with a view of securing these several branches, that the government, in 1736, prohibited the use of jewels, and gold and silver stuffs, we may venture to say, that plainer and easier means might have been used. They should have removed a multitude of difficulties, which clog the commercial intercourse of the citizens, and hinder a free communication between the different parts of the kingdom. The whale fishery, the Greenland and Iceland trade, once rescued from the bondage of monopolies, and that of the islands of Fero given up by the king, would have been pursued with new zeal. Their foreign connections would have received equal improvement, if the Barbary company had been suppressed, and all the members of the state had been released from the obligation, which was imposed upon them in 1726, to buy their wine, salt, brandy, and tobacco, at Copenhagen.

In the present state of affairs, their exports are but small. In the provinces on the German continent, they consist of five or six thousand beeves, three or four thousand horses fit for cavalry, and some rye, which is sold to the Swedes and Dutch. For some years past, Denmark has consumed all the wheat, which Fionia and Allan used to export to other nations.

(*a*) 175,000 l. (*b*) 3,062,500 l. (*c*) 1,006,250 l.

tions. Those two islands, as well as Zeland, have now no other traffick but in those magnificent harnesses, which are purchased at so dear a rate by all who love fine horses. The trade of Norway consists of herrings, timber, masts, tar, and iron. Lapland and Greenland produce furs. From Iceland they get cod, whale-blubber, seals, and manatees, sulphur, and that luxurious down so celebrated under the name of eider-down.

We shall close here the details, into which the commerce of Denmark has necessarily led us, and which are sufficient to convince that power, that nothing can contribute so much to her interests, as having the sole possession and traffic of all the productions of her American islands. The more her possessions are limited in the New World, as they always will be within the torrid zone, the more attentive ought she to be, not to let any of the advantages she might draw from them escape her. In a state of mediocrity, the least negligence is attended with serious consequences. We shall presently have occasion to observe, that nations which are possessed even of extensive and rich territories, do not commit faults with impunity.

END OF THE TWELFTH BOOK.

Q. 3.

BOOK

BOOK XIII.

Settlement of the French in the American islands.

EVER since the tragical end of the best of her kings, France had been in perpetual confusion, from the caprices of an intriguing queen, the oppressions of a rapacious stranger, and the schemes of a weak-minded favourite. A despotick minister began to enslave the nation; when some of her sailors, excited as much by the desire of independence, as by the allurements of riches, steered their course towards the Leeward islands, in hopes of making prizes of the Spanish vessels that frequented those seas. Their courage having been successful on many occasions, it became necessary for them to seek out for a place of safety to refit. This they found at St. Christopher's. That island appeared to them a proper place for securing the success of their expeditions, and they were, therefore, desirous of obtaining authority to establish a settlement upon it. Denambuc, their chief, not only procured liberty to settle there, but likewise to extend as far as he would or could, in the great Archipelago of America. Government required, for this permission merely, which was unaccompanied with any succours or support, a twentieth part of the produce of every colony that might be founded.

The French islands languish under exclusive privileges.

IN 1626, a company was formed, in order to reap the benefit of this grant. Such was the custom of those times, when trade and navigation had not attained sufficient vigour to be left to the liberty of every individual. This company obtained very great privileges. Government gave them the property of all the islands they should cultivate, and im-

powered

powered them to exact an hundred weight of tobacco, or fifty pounds of cotton, of every inhabitant, from sixteen to sixty years of age. They were likewise to have the exclusive right of buying and selling. A capital of at first only 45,000 livres (*d*), and which was never increased to three times that sum, procured them all these advantages.

It seemed impossible to effect any thing of importance with such inadequate means. Swarms of bold and enterprising men, however, poured out from St. Christopher's, who hoisted the French flag in the neighbouring islands. Had the company which excited this spirit of invasion by a few privileges, acted upon a consistent and rational plan, the state could not have failed soon to have derived some advantage from this restless disposition. But unfortunately, they acted, as monopolizers always did and will act; an inordinate lust of gain made them become unjust and cruel.

The Dutch, apprised of this tyranny, came and offered provisions and merchandise on far more moderate terms. Their proposals were readily accepted. This laid the foundation of a connection between those republicans and the colonists, that could never afterwards be broken; and gave rise to a competition, not only fatal to the company in the New World, where it prevented the sale of their cargoes; it even pursued them through all the markets of Europe, where these interlopers sold all the produce of the French islands at a reduced price. Discouraged by this deserved reverse of fortune, the company sunk into a state of total inaction, which deprived them of most of their profits, without lessening any of their expences. In vain did the government remit the stipulated reserve of the twentieth part of the profit; this indulgence was not sufficient to restore their activity. Some of the proprietors were of opinion, that, by renouncing the destructive principles which had been hitherto adopted, they might still be able to retrieve their affairs: But the greater number thought it impracticable, notwithstanding all their advantages, to cope with such frugal private traders as their rivals were.

This

This opinion brought on a revolution. The company, to prevent their total ruin, and that they might not sink under the weight of their engagements, put their possessions up to auction; and they were mostly bought up by their respective governors.

In 1649, Boisseret purchased, for 73,000 livres (*a*), Guadalupe, Marigalante, the island called *The Saints*, and all the effects belonging to the company on these several islands: He afterwards parted with the half of this purchase, in favour of Houel his brother-in-law. In 1650, Duparquet paid but 60,000 livres (*b*) for Martinico, St. Lucia, Granada, and the Granadines. Seven years after, he sold Granada and the Granadines to Count Cerillac, for one third more than he had given for his whole purchase. In 1651, Malta bought St. Christopher's, St. Martin, St. Bartholomew, Santa Cruz, and Tortuga, for 120,000 livres (*c*), which were paid down by the commandant of Poincy, who governed those islands. The knights of Malta were to hold them in fief of the crown, and were not allowed to intrust any but a Frenchman with the administration of them.

The new possessors enjoyed the most extensive authority. They disposed of the lands. All places, both civil and military, were in their gift. They had the right of pardoning those whom their deputies condemn to death; in short, they were so many petty sovereigns. It was natural to expect, that, as their domains were under their own inspection, agriculture would make a rapid progress. This conjecture was in some measure realized, notwithstanding the contests, which were necessarily sharp and frequent under such masters. However, this second state of the French colonies did not turn out more beneficial to the nation than the first. The Dutch continued to furnish them with provisions, and to bring away the produce, which they sold indiscriminately to all nations, even to that which ought to have reaped the sole advantage of it, because it was her own property.

The mother-country suffered considerably from this evil, and Colbert was in a mistake as to the means of redress.

(*a*) 3,193 l. 15 s. (*b*) 2,625 l. (*c*) 5,250 l.

redress. That great man, who had for some time presided over the finances and trade of the kingdom, had set out at first upon a wrong plan. The habit of living with the farmers of the revenue under the administration of Mazarin, had accustomed him to consider money, which is but an instrument of circulation, as the source of every thing. He imagined that manufactures were the readiest way to draw it from abroad; and that in the workshops were to be found the best resources of the state, and in the tradesmen the most useful subjects of the monarchy. He thought the best way to increase the number of these men, was to keep the necessaries of life at a low price, and to discourage the exportation of corn. The production of materials was the least object of his care, and he bent his whole attention to the manufacturing of them. This preference of industry to agriculture, became the reigning taste; and, unfortunately, this destructive system still prevails.

Had Colbert entertained just notions of the improvement of lands, and of the encouragement it requires, and of the liberty the husbandman must enjoy, he would have pursued, in 1664, a very different plan from that which he adopted. It is well known, that he redeemed Guadalupe and its dependent islands for 125,000 livres (a); Martinico for 120,000 (b); the Granades for 100,000 (c); and all the possessions of Malta for 500,000 livres (d). So far his conduct was deserving of commendation: It was fit he should restore so many branches of sovereignty to the body of the state. But he ought never to have subjected possessions of such importance to the oppressions of an exclusive company; a measure proscribed as much by past experience, as by reason. Ministry was probably in hopes, that a society, into which were to be incorporated those of Africa, Cayenne, and North-America, and what little trade was beginning to be carried on upon the coasts of St. Domingo, would become an irresistibly permanent power, from the great combinations it would have opportunities of forming, and the facility it would acquire of repairing from one quarter,

(a) 5,468 l. 15 s.

(b) 5,250 l.

(c) 4,375 l.

(d) 21,875 l.

ter, the losses it might sustain in another. They thought to secure the future splendor of the company, by lending them the tenth part of the amount of their capital, free from interest for four years, by permitting the exportation of all provisions, duty free, into their settlements, and by prohibiting, as much as they could, the competition of the Dutch.

Notwithstanding all these advantages, the company was never in a flourishing state. The errors they fell into, seemed to increase in proportion to the number of concessions that had been injudiciously bestowed upon them. The knavery of their agents, the disheartened condition of the colonists, the devastations of war, with other causes, concurred to throw their affairs into the utmost confusion. Their ruin was advancing, and appeared inevitable in 1674, when the state judged it proper to pay off their debts, which amounted to 3,523,000 livres (*a*), and to reimburse them their capital of 1,287,185 livres (*b*). These generous terms restored to the body of the state those valuable possessions which had been hitherto as it were alienated from it. The colonies were truly French; and all the citizens, without distinction, were at liberty to go and settle there, or to open a communication with them.

The French islands recover their liberty. Obstacles which impede their success.

THE transports of joy this event occasioned in the islands, can hardly be expressed. They were now freed from the chains under which they had so long been oppressed, and nothing seemed capable of abating the active spirit of labour and industry. Every individual gave a full scope to his ambition, and thought himself at the eve of making an immense fortune. If they were deceived in these expectations, this cannot be attributed either to their presumption or their indolence. Their hopes were very natural, and their whole conduct was such as justified and confirmed them. Unfortunately the prejudices of the mother-country threw insurmountable difficulties in their way.

First,

(*a*) 154,134 l. 5 s.

(*b*) 56,344 l. 6 s. 10½ d.

First, it was required, even in the islands, that every free man, and every slave, of either sex, should pay a yearly poll-tax of an hundred weight of raw sugar. In vain did they remonstrate, that the condition imposed upon the colonies, to trade only with the mother-country, was of itself a sufficient hardship, a reason why they should be exempted from all other taxes. These representations were not considered with that attention that they ought to have been; whether from necessity, or from ignorance on the part of government, those farmers who ought to have been assisted with loans without interest, or with gratuities, saw part of their harvest collected by greedy tax-gatherers; which, had it been returned into their own fertile fields, would gradually have increased their produce.

Whilst the islands were thus stripped of part of their merchandize, the spirit of monopoly was taking effectual measures in France to reduce the price of what was left them. The privilege of buying them up was limited to a few sea-ports. This was a manifest infringement of the essential rights vested in the other harbours of the kingdom; but to the colonies it proved a very unfortunate restriction, because it lessened the number of buyers and sellers on the coasts.

To this disadvantage another was soon added. The ministry had endeavoured to exclude all foreign vessels from those distant possessions, and had succeeded, because they were in earnest. These navigators obtained from avarice the privilege that was denied them by the laws. They purchased of the French merchants passes to go to the colonies, where they took in their loadings, and carried them directly to their own country. This unfair dealing might have been punished and suppressed in many different ways; and the most pernicious was fixed upon. All ships were required to give in their return, not only at home, but likewise at the ports from whence they had sailed. This restraint necessarily brought on a considerable expence to no purpose, and could not fail of enhancing the price of American commodities.

The sale of sugar, the most important of these commodities, soon met with another check. The refin-

ers,

ers, in 1682, petitioned that the exportation of raw sugars might be prohibited; in which they seemed to be influenced merely by publick good. They alleged, that it was repugnant to all sound principles, that the original produce should be sent away to support foreign manufactures, and that the state should voluntarily deprive itself of the profits of so valuable a labour. This plausible reasoning made too much impression upon Colbert; and the consequence of it was, that the refining of sugar was kept up at the same exorbitant price, and the art itself never received any improvement. This was not approved by the people who consumed this article: The French sugar trade decayed, and that of the rival nations increased.

Some of the colonists, observing that the system was not dropped, notwithstanding this fatal experiment, solicited leave to refine their own sugars. They had so many means of going through this process at a trifling expence, that they flattered themselves they might soon recover that preference they had lost in the foreign markets. This new revolution was more than probable, had not every hundred weight of refined sugar they sent home, been clogged with a duty of 8 livres (a) on entering the kingdom. All they could do under the load of this heavy imposition, was to bear up against the competition of the refiners in France. The produce of the respective manufactures was all consumed at home; and those in power chose rather to relinquish an important branch of trade, than to own that they had been guilty of a mistake in prohibiting the importation of raw sugars.

From this period, the colonies, which supplied twenty-seven millions weight of sugar, could not dispose of it all in the mother-country, which consumed but twenty millions. The want of a demand made it needless to cultivate any more than what was necessary. This medium could only be settled in process of time; and before this was effected, the commodity sunk to the lowest ebb. This fall, which was likewise owing to the negligent manner of refining it, was so great, that

(a) 7s.

that raw sugar, which sold for 14 or 18 livres * *per* hundred, in 1682, brought no more than 5 or 6 †, in 1713.

The low price of the staple commodity would have made it impossible for the colonists to increase the number of their slaves, even if the government by its proceedings had not contributed to this mischief. The negro trade was always in the hands of exclusive companies, who imported but few, on purpose to keep up their price. We have good authority to assert, that, in 1698, there were not twenty thousand negroes in those numerous settlements; and it may safely be affirmed, that most of these had been brought in by interlopers. Fifty-four ships of a moderate size were sufficient to bring over the whole produce of these colonies.

The French islands could not but sink under so many difficulties. If the inhabitants did not forsake them, and carry their industry elsewhere, their perseverance must be attributed to some trifling advantages, which still kept them in hopes that their circumstances would turn better. The culture of tobacco, cocoa, indigo, cotton and arnotto, was rather encouraged. Government supported it indirectly, by laying heavy duties on the foreign importation of these articles. This slight favour gave them time to wait for a happier revolution, which was brought about in 1716.

At this period, a plain and simple regulation was substituted in lieu of equivocal orders, which greedy officers of the revenue had from time to time extorted, from the wants and weakness of government. The merchandise destined for the colonies was exempted from all taxes. The duties upon American commodities designed for home consumption, were greatly lowered. The goods brought over for exportation, were to be entered and cleared out freely, upon paying three *per cent.* The duties laid upon foreign sugars, were to be levied everywhere alike, without any regard to particular immunities, except in cases of re-exportation in the ports of Bayonne and Marseilles.

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In

* Between 11 s. and 12 s. † Not quite 5 s. on an average.

In granting so many favours to her remote possessions, the mother-country was not unmindful of her own interests. All merchandise prohibited at home, was also forbidden in the colonies. To secure the preference to their own manufactures, it was enacted, that even such goods as were not prohibited should pay duty on their entry into France, although they were destined for the colonies. Salt beef alone, which the mother-country could not furnish in competition, was exempted from this obligation.

This regulation would have been as good a one as the times would admit of, if the edict had allowed that the trade from America, which till then had been confined to a few sea-ports, should be general, and had released ships from the necessity of returning to the place from whence they came. These restraints limited the number of seamen, raised the expences of navigation, and prevented the exportation of the territorial productions. The persons who were then concerned in the government of the state, ought to have been aware of these inconveniencies, and no doubt intended one day to restore to trade that freedom and activity which alone can make it flourish. They were probably forced to sacrifice their own maxims to the clamours of men in office, who loudly disapproved of whatever clashed with their interest.

Notwithstanding this weakness, the colonists, who had reluctantly given up the hopes of an excellent soil, bestowed their utmost industry upon it, as soon as they were allowed that liberty. Their success astonished all nations. If government, on the arrival of the French in the New World, had but foreseen what they learned from experience a century later, the state might soon have enjoyed, from the advantages of cultivation, that wealth which would have added more to its prosperity than conquests. It would not then have been as much ruined by its victories, as by its defeats. Those wise ministers who repaired the losses of war by a happy revolution in trade, would not have had the mortification to see that Santa Cruz was evacuated in 1696, and St. Christopher's given up at the peace of Utrecht. Their concern would have been greatly heightened,

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heightened, could they have foreseen, that, in 1763, we should be reduced to deliver up the Granades to the English. Strange infatuation of the ambition of nations, or rather of kings! After having sacrificed thousands of lives to acquire and to preserve a remote possession, a greater number must still be lavished to lose it. Yet France has several important colonies left, which deserve some consideration. Let us begin with Guiana, which lies to windward of all the rest.

THE great extent of this immense country, is evident from its very boundaries. It is limited on the east by the ocean; on the north by the Oronooko; on the south by the Amazon; on the west by the Rio-negro, which joins those two rivers, the largest in South-America. Guiana, in this position, may be considered as an island, at least two hundred leagues over from north to south, and above three hundred from east to west.

Settlement of the French in Guiana. Revolutions of that colony. Its advantages and its inconveniences.

The people who roved about this vast tract, so fortunately bounded, before the arrival of the Europeans, were divided into several nations, none of which were very numerous. Their manners were the same as those of the savages of the southern continent. The Caribs only, who, from their numbers and courage, were more turbulent than the rest, distinguished themselves by a remarkable custom in the choice of their chiefs. To be qualified to govern such a people, it was necessary a man should have more strength, more intrepidity, and more knowledge than the rest of his brethren, and that he should give evident and publick proofs of these superior qualifications.

The man, therefore, who aspired to the honour of leading his fellow-creatures, must, of course, be well acquainted with all the places fit for hunting and fishing, and with all the springs and roads. He was obliged to endure long and severe fasts; and was afterwards exposed to carry burthens of an enormous weight. He used to pass several nights as a centinel, at the entrance

trance of the carbet or principal hut. He was buried up to the waist in an ant's nest, where he remained for a considerable time, exposed to sharp and bloody stings. If, in all these situations, he showed a strength and fortitude fit to cope with the dangers and hardships incident to the lives of savages; if he was one who could endure every thing, and fear nothing, he was declared to be the man. He withdrew, however, as if conscious of what his intended dignity required, and concealed himself under thick bushes. The people went out to seek him in a retreat, which made him more worthy of the post he seemed to shun. Each of the assistants trod upon his head, to show him, that, being raised from the dust by his equals, it was in their power to sink him into it again, if ever he should be forgetful of the duties of his station. Such was the ceremony of his coronation. After this political lesson, all the bows and arrows were thrown at his feet, and the nation was obedient to his laws, or rather to his example.

Such were the inhabitants of Guiana, when the Spaniard Alphonso de Ojeda first landed there in 1499, with Americus Vespucius, and John de la Casa. He went over a part of it; but this voyage afforded him only a superficial knowledge of so vast a country. Many others which were undertaken at a greater expence, turned out still more unsuccessful. Yet they were still persisted in, from a motive which ever did and ever will deceive mankind.

A report prevailed, though its origin could not be discovered, that there was a country, in the interior parts of Guiana, known by the name of *del Dorado*, which contained immense riches in gold and precious stones, and more mines and treasures than ever Cortez and Pizarro had found. This fable not only inflamed the ardent imagination of the Spaniards, but fired every nation in Europe.

Sir Walter Raleigh in particular, one of the most extraordinary men that ever appeared in a country abounding in singular characters, was seized with this enthusiasm. He was passionately fond of every thing that was magnificent; he enjoyed a reputation equal

to

to that of the greatest men; he had more knowledge than those whose immediate pursuit was learning; he possessed a freedom of thinking uncommon in those days; and had a kind of romantic turn in his sentiments and behaviour. This cast of mind determined him, in 1595, to undertake a voyage to Guiana; but he returned without discovering any thing relative to the object of his voyage. On his return to England, however, he published an account, full of the most brilliant impostures that ever amused the credulity of mankind.

The French had not waited for this fallacious testimony, to turn their thoughts towards so famous a country. They had long before embraced the general prejudice, with that vivacity which is peculiar to them. Whilst the hopes of their rivals were engaged on the side of the Oronooko, they sought to realize their own expectations upon the river Amazon. After many fruitless excursions, they at length settled on the island of Cayenne in 1635.

Some merchants of Rouen, thinking that this settlement might turn out to advantage, united their stock in 1643. They intrusted their affairs in the hands of a ferocious man, named Poncet de Bretigny, who having declared war both against the colonists and the savages, was soon murdered. This catastrophe damped the courage of the associates, and a fresh company started up in 1651, which seemed to bid fair for outdoing the former. They set out with so large a capital as to enable them to collect, in Paris itself, seven or eight hundred colonists. These embarked on the Seine, in order to sail down to Havre de Grace. Unfortunately the virtuous Abbé de Marivault, who was the soul of this undertaking, and was to have had the management of it as director-general, was drowned as he was stepping into his boat. Roiville, a gentleman of Normandy, who was going over to Cayenne as general, was assassinated in the passage. Twelve of the principal adventurers, who were the perpetrators of this deed, and had undertaken to put the colony into a flourishing condition, behaved there in as atrocious a manner as might be expected from so horrid a beginning.

ning. They hanged one of their own number; two died; three were banished to a desert island; the rest abandoned themselves to all kinds of excess. The commandant of the citadel deserted to the Dutch with part of his garrison. The remainder, who had escaped hunger, poverty, and the fury of the savages, which had been roused by numberless provocations, thought themselves happy in being able to get over to the Leeward islands in a boat and two canoes. They abandoned the fort, ammunition, arms, and merchandise, with five or six hundred dead bodies of their wretched companions, fifteen months after they had landed on the island.

A new company was formed in 1663, under the direction of La Barré, master of requests. Their capital was no more than 200,000 livres (*a*). The assistance they obtained from the ministry, enabled them to expel the Dutch, who, under the conduct of Spranger, had taken possession of the lands granted to them, after they had been evacuated by their countrymen. A year after, this small body made a part of that company, and the possessions and privileges of all the rest were united. Cayenne returned into the hands of government, at that happy period which restored freedom to all the colonies. It was taken in 1667 by the English, and in 1676 by the Dutch; but has never even been attacked since that time.

This settlement, so often overturned, had but just begun to be re-established, and to enjoy some tranquillity, when great hopes were entertained of its success. Some pirates, laden with spoils they had gathered in the South Seas, came and fixed there; and, what was of greater consequence, resolved to employ their treasures in the cultivation of the lands. It was probable, that their plan would be prosecuted with vigour, because their resources were great; when Ducasse, who was reputed an able seaman, came with some ships, in 1688, and proposed to them the plundering of Surinam. This roused their natural taste; the new colonists became pirates again, and almost all the inhabitants followed their example.

The

(*a*) 8,750 l. Sterling.

The expedition proved unfortunate. Some of the besiegers fell in the attack, the rest were taken prisoners, and sent to the Caribbees, where they settled. The colony has never recovered this loss. Far from extending into Guiana, it has only languished at Cayenne.

This island is only parted from the continent by two rivers. It may be about sixteen leagues in circumference. By a disposition very uncommon in islands, and which makes it not very fit to be inhabited, the land is high near the water side, and low in the middle. Hence it is intersected with so many morasses, that all communication is impracticable, without taking a great circuit. Until the lands that are under water are drained, and secured from future inundations by dykes properly raised, there will be no place fit for culture, except the rising grounds. There are some small tracts of an excellent soil; but the generality of it is dry, sandy, and soon spent. The only town on the colony is defended by a covered way, a large ditch, a very good mud rampart, and five bastions. In the middle of the town, is a pretty considerable eminence, of which a redoubt has been made that is called the fort, where forty men might demand a capitulation, after the town was taken. The entrance into the harbour is through a narrow canal, and ships can only get in at high water, through the rocks and reefs that are scattered about this pass.

The first produce of Cayenne, was the arnotto. This is a red dye, called by the Spaniards *achiote*, into which they dip white wool, whatever colour they intend to give it. The tree that yields this dye, has a reddish bark, and large, strong, and hard leaves, of a dark green. It is as high as a plumb tree, and more bushy. The flowers, that grow in bunches, not unlike wild roses, are succeeded twice a year by pods, as prickly as the shell of a chestnut, but smaller. They contain some little seeds of a pale red, and these make the arnotto.

As soon as one of the eight or ten pods that grow in a bunch opens of itself, all the rest may be gathered. The seeds are then to be taken out, and thrown directly

directly into large troughs, full of water. When the fermentation begins, the seeds are to be bruised several times with wooden pestles, till the skin comes off. The whole is then poured into sieves, made of rushes, which retain all the solid parts, and let out a thick, reddish, and fetid liquor into iron coppers. As it boils, the scum is taken off, and saved in large pans. When the liquor yields no more scum, it is thrown away as useless, and the scum poured back into the copper.

This scum, which is to be boiled for ten or twelve hours, must be constantly stirred with a wooden spatula, to prevent its sticking to the copper, or turning black. When it is boiled enough, and somewhat hardened, it is spread upon boards to cool. It is then made up into cakes of two or three pounds weight, and the whole business is finished.

From the culture of the arnotto, Cayenne proceeded to that of cotton, of indigo, and at last of sugar. It was the first of all the French colonies that attempted to cultivate coffee; which was brought thither in 1721 by some deserters, who purchased their pardon by conveying it from Surinam, where they had taken refuge. Ten or twelve years after, they planted cocoa. In 1752, 260,541 pounds weight of arnotto, 80,363 pounds of sugar, 17,919 pounds of cotton, 26,881 pounds of coffee, 91,916 pounds of cocoa, 618 pieces of timber, and 104 planks, were exported from the colony. All these articles were the fruit of the labour of ninety French families, an hundred and twenty-five Indians, and fifteen hundred blacks, which made up the whole of the colony.

Such, and weaker still, was the state of the Cayenne, when, to the astonishment of the publick, in 1763, the court of Versailles endeavoured to raise its consequence. The French had then just emerged from the horrors of an unsuccessful war. The situation of affairs had determined the ministry to purchase peace with the cession of several important colonies. It appeared equally necessary to make the nation forget her calamities, and the errors that had been the cause of them. The prospect of better fortune might amuse

amuse the people, and silence their clamours; while their attention was removed from possessions the nation had lost, and turned towards Guiana, which, it was given out, would compensate all their misfortunes.

This vast country, which was long decorated with the pompous title of Equinoxial France, was not the sole property of that power, as had formerly been given out. The Dutch, by settling to the north, and the Portuguese to the south, had confined the French between the rivers of Maroni and Vincent Pinçon; which limits were fixed by several treaties. These boundaries were equally distant from Cayenne, and the extent between them comprehends no less than an hundred leagues of sea-coast. The navigation along this coast is extremely difficult, on account of the rapidity of the currents, and is continually obstructed by small islands, banks of sand and of hardened mud, and by strong mangroves closely entangled, that extend two or three leagues into the sea. There is no harbour, few places where ships can land, and the lightest sloops often meet with insuperable difficulties. The large and numerous rivers that water this continent, are not more navigable. Their channels, in many places, are barred by huge rocks, which render navigation impracticable. The shore, which is flat almost in every part, is mostly overflowed by the spring-tides. In the inland country, most of the plains and vallies are only morasses in the rainy season. Then there is no safety but upon higher ground. These torrents of water, however, that suspend all the labours of the field, moderate the heat of the weather, without producing that malignant influence upon the climate which might be apprehended from them. No certain account can be given of the population of the inland parts. That of the sea-coast may amount to nine or ten thousand men, divided into several nations, the most powerful of which are the Galibis. Some missionaries, by great attention and perseverance, have found means to fix some of those roving nations, and even to reconcile them to the French, against whom they had, with reason, entertained the most dreadful prejudices.

The

The first adventurers who frequented this region, took away or bought men, whom they condemned to the hardest labours of slavery, on the very soil where they were born free, or sold them to the colonists of the Leeward Islands. Their common price, at first, was twenty pistoles (a) a head. Happily for the inhabitants, they rose so exorbitantly in their demands, that no purchasers could be found. It was thought better to purchase negroes, who were almost as expert at hunting and fishing, and much more so at the labours of the great plantations that were then carrying on in every part.

Guiana, as we have described it, appeared a very valuable resource to the French ministry, reduced as they were to the necessity of repairing the great mistakes they had committed. A few considerations will enable us to judge of their motives.

America presents itself to Europe under two different views. It offers to those who emigrate from us, two zones to be peopled and cultivated, the torrid, and the northern temperate zone. The first, more fruitful, and more rich, but merely so in articles of luxury and indulgence, must, of course, afford a brighter prospect, and convey a speedier and more extensive influence to the powers that made themselves masters of it. This zone being more apparently calculated for despotism, because the heat of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, dispose men to become slaves, for the sake of quiet and pleasure, was, therefore, most fit to be in the hands of absolute monarchies, and to be peopled with slaves, who should only cultivate such productions as were proper to enervate the vigour and elasticity of the fibres, by increasing the number of lively sensations. The mines that abound there, affording wealth without labour, must naturally hasten the decay of states, by the occasion they afford of exciting our desires, and our facility of gratifying them. The nations who inhabit that zone, must, of course, either fall into indolence, or engage in undertakings suggested by a ruinous ambition, which becomes the more so from its first successes. Mistaking the fruit or sign of wealth

for

(a) 16 l. 15 s.

for the creative principle of political strength, those states fondly imagined, that with money they could keep the nations in their pay, as they kept the negroes in their chains; and never considered, that the very money which would procure allies, would make of them so many powerful enemies; who, uniting their arms with foreign riches, would exert this double force to subvert the whole.

The temperate zone of North America could only attract free and laborious people. It furnishes no productions but what are common and necessary; and which, for that very reason, are a never-failing source of wealth and strength. It favours population, by supplying materials for that peaceful and sedentary husbandry which fixes and multiplies families; and, as it does not excite inordinate desires, is a security against invasion. It extends through an immense continent, and presents a large extent, on every side open to navigation. Its coasts are washed by a sea which is generally in a navigable state, and abounds with harbours. The colonists are not at so great a distance from the mother country; they live in a climate more analogous to their own; and in a situation that is fit for hunting, fishing, husbandry, and for all the manly exercises and labours which improve the strength of the body, and are preservatives against the vices that taint the mind. Thus, in America, as in Europe, the north will get the better of the south. The one will be covered with inhabitants and plantations, whilst the other will sink under voluptuous liquors and its golden mines. The one will be able to polish the savage nations, by their intercourse with a free people; the other will only form a monstrous and feeble mixture of a race of slaves with a nation of tyrants.

It was of the greatest consequence to the southern colonies, to have the roots of population and vigour in the north, where they might exchange the commodities of luxury for those of necessity, and keep open a communication that might afford them succours, if they were attacked; a retreat, in case they were defeated; and a supply of land forces to balance the weakness of their naval resources.

The

The French southern colonies enjoyed this advantage before the last war. Canada, by its situation, the warlike genius of its inhabitants, their alliances with the Indian nations in friendship with the French, and fond of the frankness and freedom of their manners, enabled them to cope with, or at least disturb New England. The loss of that great continent determined the French ministry to seek for support from another. Guiana was thought to be no bad substitute, if a free and national population could be established there, which might be able to resist foreign attacks, and, in course of time, to furnish a speedy assistance to the other colonies, when circumstances might require it.

Such was evidently the system of the minister. He did not imagine, that a region thus inhabited, could ever enrich the mother country, by the produce of such commodities as are peculiar to the southern colonies. He was too intelligent not to know, that there is no such thing as selling, without complying with the general run of the market, and that this cannot be done but by producing saleable commodities at as low a rate as other nations can afford them, and that labours executed by free men, must, of necessity, bear a much higher price than those that are exacted from slaves.

The measures were directed by an active minister. As a wise politician, who does not sacrifice safety to wealth, he only proposed to raise a bulwark to protect the French possessions. As a philosopher, who feels for his fellow-creatures, who knows and respects the rights of humanity, he wished to people these fertile but desert regions with free men. But genius, especially when too impatient of success, cannot foresee every circumstance. The mistake proceeded from supposing that Europeans would be able to undergo the fatigues of preparing lands for cultivation under the torrid zone; that men, who quitted their own country only in hopes of living more comfortably abroad, would accommodate themselves to the precarious subsistence of a savage life, in a worse climate than that which they had left; or, lastly, that it would be an

easy

easy matter to establish an intercourse of importance between Guiana and the French islands.

This bad system, which the government was drawn into by a set of bold men, who were either misled by their presumption, or who sacrificed the publick good to their own private views, was as extravagantly executed as it had been inconsiderately adopted. All was jumbled together, without any principle of legislation, and without considering in what manner Nature had suited the several lands to the men who were to inhabit them. The inhabitants were divided into two classes, the proprietors and the mercenaries. They were not aware, that this division, at present established in Europe, and in most civilized nations, was the consequence of wars, of revolutions, and of the numberless chances to which time gives birth; that it was the effect of the progress of sociability, but not the basis and foundation of society, which, in its beginning, requires that all her members should partake of her property. Colonies, which are new populations and new societies, ought to adhere to this fundamental rule. It was here broken through at first setting out, by allotting lands in Guiana, to those only who were able to advance a certain fund for the cultivation of them. Others, whose desires were tempted with uncertain hopes, were excluded from this division of the lands. This was an error of policy, contrary to the laws of humanity. Had they granted a portion of land to every new inhabitant that was sent over to this barren and desert country, each would have cleared his own spot, and have tilled it in proportion to his strength or abilities, one with the assistance of his money, another by his own labour. It was necessary that those who were possessed of a capital should neither be discouraged, because they were men of great consequence to a rising colony, nor that they should have an exclusive preference given them, lest it should prevent them from meeting assistants, who might be willing to be dependent on them. It was also indispensably necessary, that every member of the new transmigration should be offered some property, with which he might turn his labour, his industry, his money, in a word, his

greater or lesser powers to his advantage. It ought to have been foreseen, that Europeans, in whatever situation, would not quit their own country but in hopes of better fortune, and that deceiving their hopes and confidence in this respect, would be an effectual way to ruin the colony intended to be established.

In vain did government supply the colonists with two years subsistence. This was too much provision at once. It must spoil, either in the transport, or at the end of the voyage. The very passage, in which some part must be consumed, and the rest injured, could not but make these provisions dear, scarce, and noxious. A hot climate, and a damp country, would be additional causes of corruption among the eatables, and of sickness and mortality among the men. It would have been folly to pretend to carry over from Europe to Guiana a sufficient quantity of live cattle to furnish fresh meat every day for a numerous colony. Most of them would have died, either in the passage or at their arrival; for as animals are more immediately under the direction of Nature, they are the more affected by the sudden alterations of the air, and by the change of climate and food.

The increase of cattle should have preceded that of men. Both should have multiplied by degrees, and the seeds of culture in that distant region should have been sown before the inhabitants were become too numerous. The first transports should have been small, and attended with every advance, and every necessary implement for clearing the lands. In proportion as the infant colony should have produced enough, and even more than was necessary for their own consumption, the purchase of the overplus of these crops would have become a source of increase. Agriculture and population would then have mutually assisted and promoted each other. The new colonists would have drawn others after them, and society, like individuals, would have arrived at its proper strength and maturity in the space of twenty years.

These very simple and natural reflections never occurred to the contrivers of this scheme. Twelve thousand men, after a tedious navigation, were landed up-

on dreary and inhospitable shores. It is well known, that, almost throughout the torrid zone, the year is divided into two seasons, the dry and the rainy. In Guiana, such heavy rains fall, from the beginning of November to the end of May, that the lands are either overflowed, or at least unfit for tillage. Had the new colonists arrived there in the beginning of the dry season, and been placed on the lands destined for them, they would have had time to put their habitations in order, to cut down or burn the woods, and to plough and sow their fields.

For want of these precautions, they knew not where to bestow such multitudes of people as were constantly pouring in just at the rainy season. The island of Cayenne might have been a proper place for the reception and refreshment of the new comers; there they would have found lodging and assistance. But the false notion which prevailed, that the new colony must not be intermixed with the old, deprived them of this resource. In consequence of this prejudice, twelve thousand victims were landed on the banks of the Kourou, on a ridge of sand, amidst a number of unwholesome little islands, and only sheltered under a miserable awning. In this situation, totally inactive, and weary of existence, they gave themselves up to all the irregularities that idleness necessarily produces among a set of low men, removed far from their native country, and placed under a foreign sky; there they fell into a state of misery, and were seized with contagious distempers, the necessary consequences of such a situation; and their wretched fate was at length terminated in all the horrors of despair. Their ashes will for ever cry out for vengeance on the contrivers and abettors of this fatal scheme, on which such great expences had been bestowed, in the sudden destruction of so many unfortunate men; as if the devastations of war, which they were intended to repair, had not swept away a sufficient number in the course of eight years.

That nothing might be wanting to complete this horrid tragedy, fifteen hundred men, who had escaped the mortality, were washed away by the floods. They

They were placed upon lands, where they were overflowed at the return of the rains, and every one of them perished, without leaving behind them a single mark of posterity, or the least trace of their memory.

The state has deeply lamented this loss, and has impeached and punished the authors of it; but how grievous is it for our country, for the subjects, for every soul that is sensible of the value of French blood, to see it thus lavished upon ruinous enterprizes, by an absurd jealousy of authority, which enjoins the most rigorous secrecy upon all publick operations? Is it not then the interest of the whole nation that her chiefs should be well informed? and how can they be so, but from collecting general information? Why should projects, of which the people are to be both the object and the instrument, be concealed from them? Can the will be commanded without the judgment, or can we inspire courage without confidence? The only true information is to be had from publick writings, where truth appears undisguised, and falsehood fears to be detected. Secret memoirs, private schemes, are commonly the work of crafty and interested men, who insinuate themselves into the cabinets of persons in administration, by dark, oblique, and indirect ways. When a prince or a minister has acted according to the opinion of the publick, or of enlightened men, if he is unfortunate, he cannot on any account be blamed. But, when enterprizes are undertaken, without the advice, or without the knowledge of the people, when events are brought on unknown to those whose lives and fortunes are exposed by them; what can this be but a secret league, a combination of a few individuals against the bulk of society*? Can it be possible that authority should think itself degraded by an intercourse with the citizens? or, Will men in power for ever treat the rest of mankind with so great a degree of contempt,

* Ye Kings, ye Ministers, the love of the publick good, the preservation of the people, are the sole terms, the only conditions on which you are permitted to govern men, to whom Nature and God himself have given strength.

as not even to desire that the injuries they have done them should be forgiven?

What has been the consequence of that catastrophe, in which so many subjects, and so many foreigners, have been sacrificed to the illusions of the French ministry with respect to Guiana? This unhappy climate has been abused with all the rancour with which resentment and misfortune can aggravate its real evils. It has been asserted, that colonies would never be brought to flourish there, even if those very principles of culture and administration, by which all other colonies have prospered, were to be adopted. This opinion is grounded upon the barrenness of the soil, the excessive dampness of the climate, the prodigious swarms of ants with which the country is infested, and the facility the slaves have of deserting. There is some truth, but there is likewise some exaggeration, in these complaints.

Because the island of Cayenne is not very fertile; it cannot surely, without injustice, be inferred; that the neighbouring continent is altogether as rebellious to the labours of cultivation. Those who draw this inference have gone no farther than the marshy coasts of this vast country. But observers, who have penetrated into the inland parts, are quite of a different opinion; and the few experiments already made, contradict a prejudice founded merely on the first appearances.

The apprehensions, arising from the duration of the rains, are not so ill-grounded. This defect in the seasons, endangers the lives of the cultivators, increases the fatigues of their labour, and renders their crops precarious, especially that of sugar, which has hitherto been less plentiful on the continent, and inferior in quality to that which comes from the islands. But it is not to be doubted, that the inundations will subside, in proportion as the woods, which have covered these deserts, from the beginning of the world, are cleared away. Trees attract the rains and dews; and keep the ground damp by excluding the rays of the sun. If we remove these great vegetables, which by their deep roots and wide extended boughs, absorb and pump up all the

the juices of vegetation that circulate either in the inside, or in the atmosphere of the globe, nothing will remain but a moisture which will be of use to the plantations.

At present the greater part of them are over-run with ants, and many to such a degree as sometimes to baffle the best grounded hopes. But this is an evil that has molested every new settlement in America; and which, in time, they have got rid of. Many do not now suffer any inconvenience from it, the rest but little. Guiana will be less and less infested with these insects, in proportion as the lands are cleared.

As to the negroes, if there is any danger of their running away, gathering in troops, and intrenching themselves in the woods, it is the tyranny of their masters that drives them to it. No doubt this inconvenience is greater on the continent than in the islands; but the desertion of these poor wretches will be prevented, whenever their condition is made tolerable. The law of necessity, which restrains even tyrants, will prescribe that moderation in Guiana, that humanity alone should inspire everywhere.

The obstacle least attended to, though the most insuperable of all, is the difficulty, nay, the impossibility of undertaking any considerable plantations on the coast of Guiana. That coast which lies to the south of Cayenne, for the space of twenty leagues, presents nothing but a bog, which is overflowed by the tides twice a month, at the new and full moon, and dried up again in the interval between these two periods. The coast, on the north, is regularly under water, six months in the year, and its fertility must therefore be very precarious. The sugar-cane dies there the first time it bears, which increases labour without augmenting the produce. This part of the coast is besides very unwholesome. An easterly wind constantly drives thither all the malignant vapours which the heat of the sun draws from the swampy grounds of the southern coast.

The rivers of Cayenne, Aprouac, Oyapoko*, Kou-

rou,

* This river, in particular, is not subject to the same inconveniences. Here they always breathe a pure air; and the land, which

rou, and Maroni, are not liable to the same inconveniences in their course. Upon the river Sinemary there still are five or six hundred men subsisting, who escaped from the general disasters of the colony. They enjoy the most perfect health; their little plantations succeed to the utmost of their wishes; and the increase of their cattle is prodigious. The same advantages are to be expected from the highest borders of the other rivers; some of them are even fitter to be navigated, either in boats or small vessels.

All these inquiries evidently show that France ought not to give up the cultivation of Guiana. At first, the sugar will be watery and insipid, and there will be but little of it; but it has seldom been better in any grounds that have been newly cleared. Coffee, cocoa, and cotton, come to a greater degree of perfection in Guiana than in the Leeward Islands. Tobacco must thrive there. Indigo, which formerly grew there in great plenty, has degenerated, but may be retrieved by fresh seeds from St. Domingo. The arnotto is of no great value there, but the sale of it is certain. The vanilla is the natural produce of the country; but no profit has been hitherto made of it, because the pods rot as soon as they are gathered. It would, however, be an easy matter to inquire into the method of managing the trees that bear it, and to enrich Guiana with this branch of trade.

Large exportations of rice, wood, cattle, and salt fish can hardly be expected from thence. The colony might, indeed, attempt these things, but a good market would be wanting. The only one within reach would be the French windward islands, and this could never be very considerable. Those settlements having nothing to give in exchange for these commodities, the expences of navigation would necessarily make the trade decay.

But which is of an excellent soil, is never laid under water: But, in order to enjoy these advantages, it is necessary to settle twenty leagues from the sea. The facility, however, with which vessels, drawing only fourteen feet water, can get there without risk, ought to encourage the surmounting the disadvantages arising from the distance. With a little more perseverance also, advantages might be reaped from the other lands and the other rivers of the colony.

But still this last connection may fail, and yet that between Guiana and the mother country will not suffer in the least. The whole will depend upon the encouragement the court of Versailles may bestow upon the establishment. It is not attended with more difficulties than that of Surinam was, where more constant labour and greater means have never produced so much increase as in the islands. Yet Surinam is at this day covered with rich plantations. Why should not France put Guiana upon a footing with this colony of the Dutch? This may be done by giving such advantages and gratuities as every state ought to sacrifice, when large tracts of lands, which may turn out to be of great utility, are to be cleared. These clearings of rude lands are real conquests over Chaos, for the advantage of all mankind; different from those conquests which depopulate whole provinces, and lay them waste, in order to seize upon them; which cost the blood of two nations, and enrich neither; which must be defended at a great expence, and covered with troops for ages, before the peaceable possession of them can be secured. Guiana requires nothing but labour and inhabitants. How powerful the motives for encouraging both!

This colony may at pleasure multiply its cattle and increase its means of subsistence. It would be difficult to invade it, and still more to block it up; therefore, it will never be conquered. The Leeward Islands, on the contrary, already once lost, are looked upon with a wishful eye by a nation exasperated at the restitution of them. Her chagrin makes it probable she will always be disposed to recover, by force of arms, what she has lost by negotiation. The well-grounded confidence she places in her navy, and in the flourishing condition of her northern colonies, will, perhaps, soon engage her in a fresh war, in order to retake what was given up at the last peace. Should fortune again favour the wise administration of her happy government; should a people, encouraged by victories of which they themselves reap the benefits, always get the better of a nation that fights only for her kings;

Guiana

Guiana would at least afford a great resource, where all such articles as custom has made necessary, might be cultivated, and for which an enormous duty must be paid to foreigners, if the nation cannot be supplied with them from her own colonies.

Nothing has yet been done towards securing the advantages which this settlement presents. In January 1769, it consisted only of 1291 free men, and 8047 slaves. The herds did not amount to more than 1923 head of black cattle, and 1077 of small. The produce of the colony was even inadequate to these means, small as they were, because the works were carried on by white men without skill, and blacks without subordination. Time will bring on more knowledge, and better discipline. Till that happy period arrives, let us leave Guiana, and proceed to St. Lucia.

THE English took possession of this island, without opposition, in the beginning of the year 1639. They lived there peaceably for a year and a half, when a ship of their own nation, which had been overtaken by a calm off Dominica, carried off some Caribs, who were come in their canoes to bring them fruit. This violence occasioned the savages of St. Vincent and Martinico to join the offended savages; and, in August 1640, they all fell upon the new colony. In their fury, they murdered all that came in their way. The few who escaped their vengeance, quitted for ever a settlement that could be in no great forwardness.

The possession of St. Lucia, for a long time disputed, is at last ceded to the French.

In the first ages of the world, before civil and polished societies were formed, all men had a common right to every thing upon earth. Every one was free to take what he pleased for his own use, and even to consume it. The use that was thus made of common right, supplied the place of property. The moment any one had, in this manner, possessed himself of any thing, another could not take it from him without injustice. It was in this point of view, which can only be

be applied to the primitive state of nature, that the European nations considered America when it was first discovered. They considered the natives as nobody, and imagined they were sufficiently authorised to seize upon any country, if no other nation of our continent was in possession of it. Such was constantly and uniformly the only publick right observed in the New World, and which we have not been ashamed to avow, and attempt to justify, in this century, during the late hostilities.

From these principles, which the author of a philosophical history of commerce would be ashamed to approve, St. Lucia was to belong to any power that could or would people it. The French attempted it first. They sent over forty inhabitants in 1650, under the command of Rousselan, a brave, active, prudent man, and singularly beloved by the natives, on account of his having married one of their women. His death, which happened four years after, destroyed all the good he had begun to do. Three of his successors were murdered by the Caribs, who were dissatisfied with their behaviour to them; and the colony was but in a drooping condition, when it was taken in 1664 by the English, who evacuated it in 1666.

They were scarce gone, when the French appeared again on the island. Whatever was the cause, they had not increased their number much, when the enemy that had driven them out before, again forced them to quit their habitations twenty years after. Some, instead of evacuating the island, took refuge in the woods. As soon as the conquerors, who had made only a temporary invasion, were gone, they resumed their labours; but only for a short time. The war, which soon after raged in Europe, made them apprehensive that they might fall a prey to the first privateer that should take a fancy to come and plunder them; they therefore removed, in search of quiet, to other French settlements, which were stronger, and where they might hope for better protection. There was then no regular culture or colony in St. Lucia. It was only frequented by the inhabitants of Martinique, who

who came thither to cut wood, and to build canoes, and who had considerable docks on the island.

Some soldiers and sailors who had deserted, having taken refuge there after the peace of Utrecht, Marshal d'Estrees petitioned for a grant of the island. No sooner was it obtained, in 1718, but he sent over a commandant, troops, cannon, and inhabitants. This gave umbrage to the court of London, which had a kind of claim to this island, from prior settlement, as that of Versailles had, from almost uninterrupted possession. Their complaints determined the French ministry to order, that things should be put into the same condition they were in before the grant. Whether this compliance did not appear sufficient to the English, or whether it gave them room to think they might venture upon any thing, they themselves gave St. Lucia, in 1722, to the Duke of Montague, who sent to take possession of it. This clashing of interests occasioned some disturbance between the two courts; which was settled, however, in 1731, by an agreement made, that, till the respective claims should be finally adjusted, the island should be evacuated by both nations, but that both should wood and water there.

This precarious agreement furnished an opportunity for private interest to act. The English no longer molested the French in the enjoyment of their habitations, but employed them as a channel to assist them in carrying on with richer colonies smuggling connections, which the subjects of both governments thought equally advantageous to them. This trade continued more or less brisk till the treaty of 1763, which secured to France the long and obstinately contested property of St. Lucia.

THE first use which the court of Versailles proposed to make of her acquisition, was to fix a magazine there. It had been the general opinion, for some years past, that the wood and cattle of North America were absolutely necessary for these southern colonies. It was found inconvenient to carry them directly thither, and St. Lucia was pitched upon

*What became
of St. Lucia
in the hands
of the French.*

upon as a very proper place for the exchange of these commodities for the molasses of Martinico and Guadelupe. This scheme was soon found to be impracticable.

To bring it to bear, the English must either deposite their cargoes in store-houses, or keep them on board, or sell them to traders settled on the island: Three things equally impossible.

These navigators will never consent to lose sight of their cattle, as the expences they would incur for taking care of them, for their food, or from accidents, would infallibly ruin them. Neither will they pay for ware-houses for their wood, which is too cheap and too bulky a commodity to be worth the charge of store-room. Nor can it be expected that they should quietly sit on board their ships, waiting till some traders should come from the French islands to deal with them: The nature of their trade will not admit of such delays. The only remaining way of managing this, would be by means of traders who might settle on the island as brokers; but the profit they must necessarily make, would enhance the price of the goods so much, that it would be impossible to carry on the trade through their channel.

The difficulties are not less on the side of the owners of molasses, than on that of the dealers in northern commodities. Accustomed to sell their spirits at 35 or 36 livres (a) a barrel, they would never consent to an abatement of two fifths, which must be allowed for carriage, leakage, and commission. If the English are obliged to pay an higher price for the molasses, they must, of course, raise that of their own commodities, and this advance will make them too dear for the consumer.

The French ministry, undeceived as to their first notion, without formally giving it up, have turned their thoughts to the cultivation of St. Lucia. In 1763, they sent over, at a great expence, and with unnecessary parade, seven or eight hundred men, whose unhappy fate is more a matter of pity than surprize. Under the tropicks, the best established colonies always de-

stroy

(a) 1 l. 11 s. on an average.

stroy one third of the soldiers that are sent thither, though they are healthy stout men, and find good accommodation. It is not surprising then, that a set of miserable wretches, picked up from the dunghills of Europe, and exposed to all the hardships of indigence, and all the horrors of despair, should most of them perish in an uncultivated and unwholesome island.

The advantage of peopling this colony, was reserved to the neighbouring settlements. Some Frenchmen, who had sold, upon very advantageous terms, their plantations at the Grenades to the English, brought part of their capital to St. Lucia. Several planters from St. Vincent's, incensed at being obliged to buy lands which they themselves had been at incredible pains to clear and fertilize, took the same course. Martinico also furnished some inhabitants, whose possessions were either not sufficiently fertile, or too much confined, and traders who devoted part of their stock to husbandry. Each of these has obtained the free grant of a spot of land proportioned to his powers. Those whose means were small, have confined themselves to such labours as required no great advances. Those who were richer have soared to greater undertakings.

There are already nine parishes in the colony, eight to leeward, and only one to windward. This preference given to one part of the island, is not for the sake of a better soil, but for the conveniency of the shipping. In time, that part which was neglected at first, will likewise be inhabited, as there are creeks continually discovered, in which canoes may put in, and receive all kinds of commodities on board.

A road which goes all round the island, and two others that cross it from east to west, are very convenient for carrying the produce of the plantations to the landing places. In process of time, and with some expence, these roads will be brought to a much greater degree of perfection than it was possible they should be at first, without running into expences too burdensome for a settlement in its infant state. The interruptions occasioned by the making these roads, have unavoidably retarded the culture of the lands, and excited much murmuring; but the colonists now begin

to bless the wise and steady hand that has ordered and conducted this work for their benefit *.

On the first of January 1772, the number of the white people in the island amounted to 2018 souls, men, women, and children; that of the blacks to 663 freemen, and 12,795 slaves. The cattle consisted of 928 mules or horses, 2070 head of horned cattle, and 3184 sheep or goats. There were thirty-eight sugar plantations, which occupied 978 pieces of land; 5,395,889 coffee-trees; 1,321,600 cocoa plants; and 367 plots of cotton. They were divided into 706 dwelling places. The present produce is 4,000,000 livres †, a revenue which for some time to come must increase one-eighth every year.

A general prejudice prevailed in these islands against St. Lucia. It was said, that Nature had refused it every advantage necessary to form a colony of any importance. In the opinion of the publick, its dry and stony soil could never pay the expence of manuring. The inclemency of the climate would infallibly destroy every man, who, from a greedy desire of enriching himself, or who, driven by despair, should be bold enough to settle there. These notions were universally received.

Success must at length undeceive the most prejudiced person. The soil of St. Lucia is not a bad one even by the sea-side, and grows better as we advance up the country. The whole of the island may be cultivated with success, except some high and craggy mountains, which bear evident marks of old volcanoes. In one deep valley there are still eight or ten ponds, the water of which boils up in a most dreadful

* On the first of January 1769, the population of the free people in the island, amounted to 2524 souls, men, women, and children; and that of the slaves to 10,270. The cattle consisted of 598 mules or horses, 1819 head of horned cattle, and 2378 sheep. Its cultivation consisted of 1,279,680 cocoa plants, 2,463,880 coffee-trees, 681 plots of cotton, and 454 plantations of sugar canes. There were sixteen sugar houses going, and they were busy setting about eighteen more. There were already 24,078 lots of land disposed of by government, which yielded for the time a very considerable revenue, which indeed cannot be valued at less than 2,500,000 livres (109,375 l. Sterling).

† 175,000 l.

ful manner, and retains some of its heat at the distance of six thousand fathoms from its reservoirs. There are not indeed many extensive plains on the island, but several small ones, where the growth of sugar may be carried to fifteen millions weight. The shape of the island, which is long and narrow, will make the carriage easy, wherever the canes are planted.

The air in the inland parts of St. Lucia, is the same as it was in all the other islands before they were inhabited, foul and unwholesome at first; but less noxious as the woods are cleared, and the ground laid open. The air on some part of the sea coast is more unhealthy. On the leeward side the lands receive some small rivers, which, springing from the foot of the mountains, have not a sufficient slope to wash down the sands with which the influx of the ocean choaks up their mouths. Stopped by this unsurmountable barrier, they spread into unwholesome morasses upon the neighbouring grounds. So obvious a reason had been sufficient to drive away the few Caribs who were found upon the island when it was first discovered. The French, driven into the New World by a more powerful motive than even self-preservation, have been less careful than the savages. It is in this very spot that they have chiefly fixed their plantations. They will sooner or later be punished for their blind rapaciousness, unless they erect dykes, and dig canals, to drain off the waters. The health they enjoy along the rivers Carenage and Marigot, where the ships are careened, and those in which the rain waters are collected, which fall into deeper bays, seems to indicate that this expedient would succeed.

The character and abilities of Comte d'Ennery, the founder of this colony, authorise us to affirm, that when this island, which is about forty-five leagues in circumference, has attained the degree of cultivation it is susceptible of, it may employ fifty thousand slaves, and furnish trade with commodities to the amount of 10,000,000 * yearly. This period of prosperity cannot even be far off, as the activity of the planters is released from those fetters which have retarded their

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progress

* 437,500 L.

progress everywhere else. Fifty men, appointed to maintain publick order, are all the troops they have at St. Lucia. They pay no taxes, directly or indirectly. Ships of all nations are admitted into their roads, and pay nothing at coming in or going out. Every one is free to bring thither what goods he can sell at the cheapest rate, and to carry away such commodities as will fetch the best price. Ever since Europe has acquired possessions in America, none has met with more indulgence. Such singular favour must undoubtedly have a period, and this island, like all the others, will one day be brought under the yoke of restrictive laws. But a few years peace and freedom will enable her to bear this burden.

*Scheme of
France to se-
cure to itself
the possession
of St. Lucia.*

BEFORE this burden is imposed, the mother-country will take care to secure to herself the produce of an island which she has put into a flourishing condition. To keep possession of it, it will be sufficient to defend the Carenage harbour.

This famous harbour enjoys many advantages. It has good soundings everywhere, with an excellent bottom. Nature has provided it with three careening places, which render a wharf unnecessary, and only require the capstern to heave the ship down on the shore. Thirty ships of the line might ride safely there, and be sheltered from the hurricanes, without the trouble of mooring. The boats of that country, which have lain there for a long while, have never been injured by the worms; it is not, however, expected that this advantage will continue, whatever may be the immediate cause of it. The winds are always favourable for going out; and the largest squadron might be cleared out in less than an hour.

A situation so favourable is able not only to defend all the national possessions, but also to threaten those of the enemy throughout America. The naval forces of England cannot cover all parts. The smallest squadron sent out from St. Lucia, would in a few days carry desolation into those colonies, which, being least exposed,

exposed, would think themselves quite secure. The only way to prevent mischief from that quarter, would be to block up the Carenage; and even then, the purport of so costly and tiresome a cruize might be defeated, by a man who should be daring enough to undertake all that can be achieved at sea.

This harbour, which is subject to the inconvenience of exposing every ship that comes within sight, has never appeared worthy the attention of the British nation, though too powerful and too enlightened not to consider, that ships are to protect the roads, and not the roads the ships. With regard to France, the Carenage affords the greatest maritime defence, a position that will not allow a ship under sail to enter. She must be warped for a considerable space before she can get into it. There is no plying to windward between the two points. The soundings increasing suddenly, near the land, from twenty-five to an hundred fathom, will not permit the assailants to come to an anchor. Only one ship can come in at a time, and she would be exposed to the fire of three masked batteries, in front and on both sides.

A ship that would attack the harbour, would be under a necessity of landing at Shoque-bay, a shore a league long, which is only parted from the Carenage by the point called Vigie, which forms this bay. Once master of Vigie, the enemy would sink every ship in the harbour, or at least compel them to bring to; and that without any loss on their side; because this peninsula, though commanded by a citadel, built on the other side of the harbour, would cover the assailants by its back part. They would only have occasion for mortars, and needed not to fire a single gun, nor to endanger the life of a man.

If shutting up the entrance of the harbour against the enemy were sufficient, it would be needless to fortify Vigie. The enemy might be kept out without this precaution; but the ships of our own nation must be protected. It is necessary that a small squadron should be able to set the English forces at defiance; compel them to block the place up; take advantage of their absence, or of some error they might fall into;

all which cannot be effected without fortifying the top of the peninsula. It is true, that, by thus multiplying the points of defence, a greater number of men will be wanted; but, if there are any ships in the harbour, their sailors and gunners may be employed in defending Vigie, which they would do with the greater alacrity, as on this would depend the safety of the squadron. If there are no vessels in the harbour, Vigie will be forsaken or left defenceless, for the following reason.

On the other side of the harbour there is an eminence, called the Fortunate Morne. The flat on the top offers one of those favourable situations that are seldom to be met with, for erecting a citadel, which would require no less a force to attack it, than the best fortified place in Europe. This fortification, the plan of which is already laid, and will certainly one day be put in execution, will have the advantage of defending the Carenage-bay on all sides, of commanding all the eminences that surround it, and of making it impossible for the enemy to enter; of securing the town which is to be built on the top of the mountain; in short, of hindering the assailants from penetrating into the island, even if they had actually landed at Shoque, and made themselves masters of Vigie. Farther discussions on the means of preserving St. Lucia, must be left to the professors of the art. Let us now fix the attention of the reader on Martinico.

This island is sixteen leagues in length, and forty-five in circumference, exclusive of the capes, which sometimes extend two or three leagues into the sea. It is very uneven, and intersected in all parts by a number of hillocks, which are mostly of a conical form. Three mountains rise above these lesser eminences. The highest bears the indelible marks of a volcano. The woods with which this is covered, continually attract the clouds, which occasions noxious damps, and contributes to make it dreadful and inaccessible, whilst the two others are in most parts cultivated. From these mountains,

The French settle at Martinico upon the ruins of the Caribs.

mountains, but chiefly from the first, issue the many springs that water the island. These waters, which flow in gentle streams, are changed into torrents on the slightest storm. Their quality participates of the nature of the soil they traverse; in some places they are excellent, in others so bad, that the inhabitants are obliged to drink the water they have collected in the rainy season.

Denambuc, who had sent to reconnoitre Martinico, sailed from St. Christopher's in 1635 to settle his nation there; for he would not have it peopled from Europe. He foresaw that men, tired with the fatigue of a long voyage, would for the most part perish soon after their arrival, either from the intemperature of a new climate, or from the hardships incident to most emigrations. The sole founders of this new colony, were an hundred men, who had long lived in his government of St. Christopher's. They were brave, active, inured to labour and fatigues; skilful in tilling the ground, and erecting habitations; abundantly provided with potatoe plants, and all necessary seeds.

They completed their first settlement without the least molestation. The natives, intimidated by the fire arms, or seduced by fair promises, gave up to the French the western and southerly parts of the island, and retired to the others. This tranquillity was of short duration. The Caribs, when they saw these enterprising strangers daily increasing, were convinced that their ruin was inevitable, unless they could extirpate them; and they therefore called in the savages of the neighbouring islands to their assistance. They fell jointly upon a little fort that had been accidentally erected; but they met with such a warm reception, that they thought proper to retreat, leaving seven or eight hundred of their best warriors dead upon the spot. After this check, they kept out of the way for a long while; and, when they came back, it was with presents and penitent speeches. They were received in a friendly manner, and the reconciliation was sealed with some pots of brandy that were given them to drink.

The

The labours had been carried on with difficulty till this period. The dread of a surprise obliged the colonists of three different habitations to meet every night in that which was in the centre, and which was always kept in a state of defence. There they slept secure, guarded by their dogs and a centinel. In the day-time, no one ventured out without his gun, and a brace of pistols at his girdle. These precautions were discontinued, when the two nations came to be on friendly terms. But the one whose friendship and favour had been courted, took such undue advantages of her superiority, to extend her usurpations, that she soon rekindled a half extinguished hatred in the breast of the other. The savages, whose manner of life requires a vast extent of land, finding themselves daily more straitened, had recourse to stratagem, to weaken an enemy whom they durst not attack by force. They separated into small bands, waylaid the French, who frequented the woods, waited till the sportsman had fired his piece, and, before he had time to load it again, rushed upon him and destroyed him. Twenty men had been thus murdered, before any one was able to account for their disappearance. As soon as the circumstance was found out, the aggressors were pursued and beaten, their carbets burnt, their wives and children massacred, and those few that escaped the carnage, fled from Martinico, in 1658, and never again appeared.

The French, by this retreat, now become sole masters of the island, lived quietly upon those spots which best suited their plantations. They were then divided into two classes. The first consisted of such as had paid their passage to America; and these were called inhabitants. The government distributed lands to them, which became their absolute property, upon paying an annual tribute. They were obliged to keep watch by turns, and to contribute, in proportion to their abilities, towards the necessary expences for the publick welfare and safety. These had under their command a multitude of disorderly people brought over from Europe at their expence, whom they called *engagés*, or bondsmen. This engagement was a kind of

of slavery for the term of three years. When their time was expired, the bondsmen, by recovering their liberty, became the equals of those whom they had served.

They all confined themselves at first to the culture of tobacco and cotton; to which was soon added that of the arnotto and indigo. The culture of sugar was not begun till about the year 1650. Benjamin Dacosta, one of those Jews who are beholden for their industry to that very oppression which their nation now suffers, after having exercised it upon others, planted some cocoa trees ten years after. His example was not followed till 1684, when chocolate began to be more used in France. Cocoa then became the principal dependence of the colonists who had not a sufficient fund to undertake sugar plantations. One of those calamities which the seasons bring on, sometimes upon men and sometimes upon plants, destroyed all the cocoa trees in 1718. This spread a general consternation among the inhabitants of Martinico. The coffee tree was then held out to them, as a plank to mariners after a shipwreck.

The French ministry had received two of these trees, as a present from the Dutch, which were carefully preserved in the royal garden of plants. Two shoots were taken from these. Mr. Desclieux, who was intrusted to carry them over to Martinico, happened to be on board a ship, which fell short of water. He shared with his young trees the small portion that was allotted him for his own drinking; and, by this generous sacrifice, saved the precious trust that had been put into his hands. His magnanimity was rewarded. The coffee thrived at an amazing rate; and this virtuous patriot enjoys, with an heart-felt satisfaction, the uncommon felicity of having, as it were, saved an important colony, and of having enriched it with a fresh branch of industry.

Independent of this resource, Martinico was possessed of those natural advantages, which seemed to promise a speedy and great fortune. It is the most happily situated of all the French settlements, with regard to the winds that prevail in those seas. Its harbours possess

possess the inestimable advantage of affording a certain shelter from the hurricanes which annoy these latitudes. Its situation having made it the seat of government, it has obtained most favours, and enjoyed the ablest and most upright administration of them all. The enemy has constantly respected the valour of its inhabitants, and has seldom attacked it without having cause to repent. Its domestick peace has never been disturbed, not even in 1717, when, urged by a general discontent, the inhabitants ventured, boldly, indeed, but prudently, to send back to Europe a Governor and an Intendant, who oppressed the people under their despotism and rapaciousness. The order, tranquillity, and harmony, which the colonists found means to preserve in those times of anarchy, were a proof that they were influenced rather by their aversion from tyranny, than by their impatience of authority; and served in some measure to justify to the mother-country, a step, which, in itself, might be considered as irregular, and contrary to the established principles.

Notwithstanding all these advantages, Martinico, though in greater forwardness than the other French colonies, had made but little progress at the end of the last century. In 1700, they had but 6597 white men in all. The savages, mulattoes, and free negroes, men, women, and children, amounted to no more than 507. The number of slaves was but 14,566. All these together, made a population of 21,640 persons. The whole of the cattle was 3668 horses, or mules, and 9217 head of horned cattle. They cultivated a great quantity of cocoa, tobacco, and cotton, and had nine indigo houses, and one hundred and eighty-three small sugar plantations.

*Prosperity of
Martinico.
Causes of it.*

On the cessation of the long and bloody wars, which had carried desolation through all the continents, and all the seas of the world, and when France had relinquished her projects of conquest, and those principles of administration, by which she had been so long misled, Martinico emerged from that languid state in which all these calamities had kept her, and

soon

soon rose to an high pitch of prosperity. She became the general mart for all the windward settlements. It was in her ports that the neighbouring islands sold their produce, and bought the commodities of the mother-country. The French navigators loaded and unloaded their ships nowhere else. Martinico was famous all over Europe. She was the object of speculation, as a planter, as an agent to the other colonies, as a trader with Spanish and North-America.

As a planter, she possessed, in 1736, 447 sugar-works; 11,953,232 coffee-trees; 193,870 of cocoa; 2,068,480 of cotton; 39,400 of tobacco; 6,750 of arnotto. Her provision of food consisted of 4,806,142 banana trees; 34,483,000 trenches of cassava; and 247 plots of potatoes and yams. She had a population of 72,000 blacks, men, women, and children. Their labour had improved her plantations to the highest pitch that was consistent with the consumption then made in Europe of American productions: She exported annually to the amount of 16,000,000 livres (*a*).

The connections of Martinico with the other islands, intitled her to the profits of commission, and the charges of transport, as she alone was in possession of carriages. This profit might be rated at the tenth of the produce, and the sum total must amount to 17 or 18,000,000 of livres (*b*). This standing debt, seldom called in, was left them for the improvement of their plantations. It was increased by advances in money, slaves, and other necessary articles. Martinico thus becoming more and more a creditor to the other islands, kept them in a constant dependence, but without injuring them. They all enriched themselves by her assistance, and their profit was a benefit to her.

Her connections with Cape Breton, with Canada, and with Louisiana, procured her a market for her ordinary sugars, her inferior coffee, her molasses and rum, which would not sell in France. They gave her in exchange, salt-fish, dried vegetables, deals, and some flour. In her clandestine trade on the coasts of Spanish America, consisting wholly of goods manufactured by the nation, she was well paid for the risks which the

(*a*) 700,000 l.

(*b*) On an average about 765,600 l.

the French merchants did not chuse to run. This traffick, was less important than the former as to its object, but much more lucrative in its effects. It commonly brought in a profit of ninety *per cent.* upon the value of 4,000,000 livres (*a*), annually sent to the Caraccas, or the neighbouring colonies.

So many prosperous operations had brought an immense quantity of money into Martinico. 18,000,000 livres (*b*) were constantly circulated there with amazing rapidity. This is, perhaps, the only country in the world where the balance has ever been such, as to make it a matter of indifference to them whether they dealt in minerals or commodities.

Her extensive trade annually brought into her ports two hundred ships from France, fourteen or fifteen fitted out by the mother-country for the coast of Guinea, thirty from Canada, and ten or twelve from the islands of Margarett and Trinidad; exclusive of the English and Dutch ships that slipped in to run goods. The private navigation from the island to the northern colonies, to the Spanish continent, and to the windward islands, employed an hundred and thirty vessels from twenty to seventy tons burthen, manned with six hundred European sailors of all nations, and fifteen hundred slaves long inured to the sea-service.

At first, the navigators that frequented Martinico, used to land in those parts where the plantations lay. This practice, seemingly the most natural, was liable to great inconveniences. The north and north-east winds, which blow upon part of the coasts, keep the sea in a constant and violent agitation. Though there are many good roads, they are either at a considerable distance from each other, or from most of the habitations. The sloops destined to coast along this interval, were frequently forced by the weather to stand still, or to take in but half their lading. These inconveniences retarded the loading and unloading of the ship; and the consequence of these delays was, a waste of the crew, and an increase of expence to the buyer and seller.

Commerce, which must always reckon among its greatest advantages, that of procuring a quick return, could

(*a*) 175,000 l.

(*b*) 787,500 l.

could not but be impeded by another inconvenience, which was the necessity the trader lay under, even in the best latitudes, of disposing of his cargo in small parcels. If some industrious man undertook to save him that trouble, by selling it by retail, this enhanced the price of the goods to the colonists. The merchant's profit is to be rated in proportion to the quantity he sells. The more he sells, the more he can afford to abate of the profit which another must make who sells less.

A worse inconvenience than either of these was, that some places were overstocked with some sorts of European goods, whilst others were in want of them. The owners of the ships were equally at a loss to take in a proper lading. Most places did not afford all sorts of commodities, nor every species of the same commodity. This deficiency obliged them to touch at several places, or to carry away too much or too little of what was fit for the port where he was to unload.

The ships themselves suffered many inconveniences. Several wanted careening, and most of them required some repair. The proper assistance, on these occasions, was not to be found in the roads that were but little frequented, where workmen did not care to settle, for fear of not getting sufficient employment. They were therefore obliged to go and refit in some particular harbours, and then return and take in their lading at the place where they had made their sale. These short voyages backward and forward took up at least three or four months.

These, and many other inconveniences, made it very desirable to some of the inhabitants, and to all the navigators, to establish a magazine, where the colonies and the mother-country might send their respective matters of exchange. Nature seemed to point out Fort Royal as a fit place for this purpose. Its harbour was one of the best in all the windward islands, and so famed for its safety, that, when it was open to the Dutch vessels, they had orders from the Republick to shelter there in June, July, and August, from the hurricanes which are so frequent and so violent in those latitudes. The lands of the Lamentin which are distant but a league, are the most fertile and richest

of all the colony. The numerous rivers which water this fruitful country, convey loaded canoes almost as far as their mouths. The protection of the fortifications secured the peaceable enjoyment of all these advantages, which, however, were balanced by a swampy and unhealthy soil. Besides, this capital of Martinico was the refuge of the men of war; which branch of the navy has always oppressed the merchantmen. On this account, Fort Royal was an improper place to become the centre of business, which was therefore turned to St. Peter's.

This little town, which, notwithstanding the fires that have reduced it four times to ashes, still contains 1748 houses, is situated on the western coast of the island, in a bay or inlet which is almost circular. One part of it is built on the strand along the sea-side, which is called the Anchorage, and is the place for the ships and ware-houses. The other part of the town stands upon a low hill: It is called the Fort, from a small fortification that was built there in 1665, to check the seditions of the inhabitants against the tyranny of monopoly; but it now serves to protect the road from foreign enemies. These two parts of the town are separated by a rivulet or fordable river.

The Anchorage stands at the back of a pretty high and perpendicular hill. Shut up, as it were, by this hill, which intercepts the easterly winds, the most constant and most salubrious in these parts; exposed, without one refreshing breeze, to the scorching beams of the sun, reflected from the hill, from the sea, and the black sand on the beach; this place is extremely hot, and always unwholesome. Besides, there is no harbour; and the ships which cannot winter safely upon this coast, are obliged to take shelter at Fort Royal. But these disadvantages are compensated by the convenience of the road of St. Peter's, for loading and unloading of goods; and by its situation, which is such, that ships can freely go in and out at all times, and with all winds.

This village was the first that was built, peopled, and cultivated on the island. It is, however, not so much on account of its antiquity, as of its convenience, that

that it is become the centre of communication between the colony and the mother-country. At first, St. Peter's was the store-house for the commodities of some districts, which lay along such dreary and tempestuous coasts, that no ship could ever get at them; so that the inhabitants could not carry on trade to advantage without removing elsewhere. The agents for these colonists in those early times, were no other than the masters of small vessels, who, having made themselves known by continually sailing about the island, were enticed, by the prospect of gain, to fix upon a settled place for their residence. Honesty was the only support of this intercourse. Most of these agents could not read. None of them kept any books or journals. They had a trunk, in which they kept a separate bag for each person whose business they transacted. Into this bag they put the produce of the sales, and took out what money they wanted for the purchases. When the bag was empty, the commission was at an end. This confidence, which must appear fabulous in our days of degeneracy and dishonesty, was yet common at the beginning of this century. There are some persons still living, who have carried on this trade, where the employer had no other security for the fidelity of his agent, but the benefit resulting from it.

These plain men were successively replaced by more enlightened persons from Europe. Some had gone over to the colony, when it was taken out of the hands of the exclusive companies. Their number increased, as the commodities multiplied; and they themselves contributed greatly to the extending of the plantations by the money they advanced to the planters, whose labours had, till then, gone on but slowly, for want of such assistance. This conduct made them the necessary agents for their debtors in the colony, as they were already for their employers at home. Even the colonist who owed them nothing, was in some measure dependent on them, as he might possibly hereafter stand in need of their assistance. Suppose his crop should fail or be retarded, a plantation of sugar-canes be set on fire, or a mill blown down: If his buildings should fall, mortality carry off his cattle or his slaves;

or that every thing should be destroyed by drought or heavy rains; where could he find the means of supporting himself during these calamities, or of repairing the loss occasioned by them? These means are in twenty different hands. If only one refuses his assistance, the confusion, far from subsiding, must necessarily increase. These considerations determined such as had not yet borrowed money, to trust the agents of St. Peter's with their concerns, in order to secure a resource in times of distress.

The few rich inhabitants, whose fortunes seemed to place them above these wants, were in a manner compelled to apply to this factory. The trading captains, finding a port where they could conclude their business to the best advantage, without stirring out of their ware-houses, or even out of their ships, forsook Fort Royal, Trinity Fort, and all the other places where an arbitrary price was put upon the commodities, and where the payments were slow and uncertain. By this revolution, the colonists, being confined to their works, which require their constant presence and daily attendance, could no longer go out to dispose of their produce. They were therefore obliged to entrust it to able men, who being settled at the only frequented seaport, were at hand to seize the most favourable opportunities for buying and selling; an inestimable advantage this, in a country where trade is continually fluctuating. Guadalupe and Grenada, induced by the same motives, followed the example of Martinico.

The war of 1744 put a stop to this prosperity; not that the fault was in Martinico itself. Its navy, constantly exercised and accustomed to the exertions requisite for carrying on a contraband trade, was ready trained up for action. In less than six months, forty privateers, fitted out at St. Peter's, spread themselves about the latitudes of the Leeward Islands. They signalised themselves in a manner worthy of the ancient free-booters. They were every day returning in triumph, and laden with an immense booty. Yet, in the midst of these successes, the navigation of the colony, both to the Spanish coast and to Canada, was entirely neglected, and they were constantly disturbed even on their

their own coasts. The few ships that came from France, in order to compensate the great risks they ran, sold their goods very dear, and bought others very cheap. The produce being thus under-rated, the lands were but poorly cultivated, the works neglected, and the slaves starved. Every thing was in a languid state, and falling to decay. The peace at last restored the freedom of trade, and, with it, the hopes of recovering the ancient prosperity of the island. The event did not answer the pains that were taken to attain it.

NOR two years after the cessation of hostilities, the colony lost the contraband trade she carried on with the American Spaniards. This revolution was not owing to the vigilance of the guarda-costas. As it is more the interest of the traders to dare them, than theirs to defend themselves, the former are apt to despise men who are poorly paid to protect such rights, or enforce such prohibitions as are oftentimes unjust. Substituting register ships to fleets, was the cause that confined the enterprises of the smugglers within very narrow limits. In the new system, the number of ships was undetermined, and the time of their arrival uncertain; which occasioned a variation in the price of goods, unknown before. From that time, the smuggler, who only engaged in this trade from the certainty of a fixed and constant profit, would no longer pursue it, when it did not secure an equivalent to the risks he ran.

Decay of Martinico, and the cause.

But this loss was not so sensibly felt by the colony, as the hardships brought upon them by the mother-country. An unskilful administration clogged the reciprocal and necessary connection between the islands and North America, with so many formalities, that, in 1755, Martinico sent but four small vessels to Canada. The direction of the colonies, now fallen into the hands of greedy and ignorant clerks, was soon degraded, sank into contempt, and was prostituted by venality.

The trade of France, however, was not yet affected by the decay of Martinico. Our countrymen found traders in the road of St. Peter's, who paid them well

for their cargoes, and sent their ships home with expedition and richly laden; and they never inquired whether it was from this or the other colonies that the consumptions and produce arose. Even the negroes sent thither, sold very well; but few remained there. The greatest part of them were sent to the Grenades, to Guadalupe, and even to the neutral islands, which, notwithstanding the unlimited freedom they enjoyed, preferred the slaves brought by the French, to those which the English offered, on seemingly better terms. They were convinced, from long experience, that the choice negroes, who cost most, enriched their lands; whilst the plantations did not thrive in the hands of the negroes bought at a lower price. But these profits of the mother-country were foreign, and rather hurtful to Martinico.

She had not yet repaired her losses during the peace, nor paid off the debts which a series of calamities had obliged her to contract; when war, the greatest of all evils, broke out afresh. It was a series of misfortunes for France, which, after repeated checks and losses, made Martinico fall into the hands of the English. It was restored in July 1763, sixteen months after it had been conquered; but stripped of all the necessary means of prosperity, that had raised it to so great a degree of glory. For some years past, the contraband trade carried on to the Spanish coasts, was almost entirely lost. The cession of Canada had cut off all hopes of once more opening a communication, which had only been interrupted by transient errors. The productions of the Grenades, St. Vincent, and Dominica, which were now become British dominions, could no longer be brought into their harbours; and a new regulation of the mother-country, which forbade her holding any intercourse with Guadalupe, put an end to all hopes from that quarter.

Present state of THE colony thus stripped, and left to
Martinico. itself, nevertheless contained, at the last
 survey, which was taken on the first of
 January 1770, in the compass of twenty-eight parishes,
 12,450 white people, men, women, and children;

1,814

1,814 free blacks or molattoes; 70,553 slaves; and 443 fugitive negroes. The whole population of the island amounted to 85,260 souls. The number of births in 1766, was in the proportion of one in thirty amongst the white people, and of one in twenty-five amongst the blacks. From this observation, if it were constant, it should seem that the climate of America is much more favourable to the propagation of the Africans than of the Europeans, since the former multiply still more in the labours and hardships of slavery, than the latter in the midst of plenty and freedom. The consequence must be, that, in process of time, the increase of blacks in America will surpass that of the white men; and, perhaps, at last avenge this race of victims on the descendents of their oppressors.

The cattle of the colony consists of 8,283 horses or mules; 12,376 head of horned cattle; 975 hogs; and 13,544 sheep or goats.

Their provisions are, 17,930,596 trenches of cassava; 3,509,048 banana trees; and 406 squares and a half of yams and potatoes.

Their plantations contain 11,444 squares of land, planted with sugar; 6,638,757 coffee-trees; 871,043 cocoa trees; 1,764,807 cotton plants; 59,966 trees of cassia, and 61 of arnotto.

Her meadows or savannahs, take up 10,972 squares of land; there are 11,966 in wood; and 8,448 uncultivated or forsaken.

The plantations which produce coffee, cotton, cocoa, and other articles of less importance, are 1,515 in number. There are but 286 for sugar. They employ 116 water-mills, 12 wind-mills, and 184 turned by oxen. Before the hurricane of the 13th of August, 1766, there were 302 small habitations, and 15 sugar-works more.

In 1769, France imported from Martinico, upon one hundred and two trading vessels, 177,116 quintals of fine sugar, and 12,579 quintals of raw sugar; 68,518 quintals of coffee; 11,731 quintals of cocoa; 6,048 quintals of cotton; 2,518 quintals of cassia; 783 casks of rum; 307 casks of syrup; 150 pounds of indigo; 2,147 pounds of preserved fruits; 47 pounds of chocolate;

left to
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colate; 282 pounds of rasped tobacco; 494 pounds of rope yarn; 234 chests of liqueurs; 234 barrels of molasses, &c. &c. 451 quintals of wood for dying; and 12,108 hides in the hair. All these productions together have been bought in the colony itself, for 12,265,862 livres 14 sols (*a*). The colony, it is true, has received from the mother-country to the amount of 13,449,436 livres (*b*) of goods; but part of these have been sent away to the Spanish coasts, and another part has been conveyed to the English settlements.

All those who from instinct or duty interest themselves in the welfare of their country, cannot see, without regret, that so excellent a colony as Martinico should furnish so small a quantity of commodities, part of which is even brought from other places. It is well known, indeed, that the centre of the island, full of horrid rocks, is unfit for the culture of sugar, coffee, or cotton; that too much moisture would be hurtful to these productions; and that, should they succeed, the charges of carriage across mountains and precipices, would absorb the profits of the crops. But, in this large space, meadows would turn to very good account. The soil is excellent for pasture, and only wants the attention of government to furnish the inhabitants with the necessary increase of cattle, both for labour and food. There are other spots on the island, where the soil is ungrateful. Some are alternately spoilt by drought and rain, some are marshy, and almost always overflowed by the sea. There are others, where nothing will grow, except those aquatic plants known by the general name of mangroves, but of various species, and very unlike each other. In other parts, the ground is so stony, that it cannot be improved by labour, or is so much exhausted, that it is not worth manuring (*c*).

To

(*a*) 536,631 l. 9 s. 10 d. (*b*) 588,412 l. 16 s. 6 d.

(*c*) Those connoisseurs, however, who are most moderate in their calculations, all agree in saying, that the lands susceptible of cultivation, when put into their highest possible state of improvement, would produce a revenue of 18,000,000 (787,500 l. Sterling). But the present situation of Martinico, gives no reason to indulge such flattering hopes.

To these inconveniences, which arise from the nature of things, must be added a terrible plague it has experienced from a species of ants, formerly unknown in America. Some time ago, they ravaged Barbadoes so dreadfully, that it was a matter of deliberation, whether that island, formerly so flourishing, should not be evacuated. This calamity had greatly diminished there, when, in 1763, it began to be felt at Martinico. The mischief these insects have done to several parts of the colony, is inconceivable. All the useful vegetables have been destroyed; the quadrupeds have been unable to subsist; the largest trees have been infested in such a manner, with these insects, that even the most indelicate birds would not fix upon them. It was not without the greatest precautions that the children were preserved from being devoured; that the women could be supported till they lay in; or that the men could subsist. It was apprehended, that this numberless and devouring race would spread all over Martinico. Happily this formidable ravage has been stopped in its beginning, and seems very sensibly to be going off; but the lands, infected with this poison, yield only to the cultivation of coffee, and will not produce sugar.

Previous to this evil, those observers who were best acquainted with the colony, were all of opinion, that its plantations were susceptible of improvement, and might be increased about one fourth part. Its present situation is far from encouraging such flattering hopes.

THE proprietors of the lands on the island, may be divided into four classes. The first are possessed of an hundred large sugar plantations, in which twelve thousand negroes are employed. The second have one hundred and fifty, worked by nine thousand blacks. The third possess thirty-six, with two thousand blacks. The fourth, devoted to the culture of coffee, cotton, cocoa, and cassava, may employ twelve thousand negroes. The remaining slaves of both sexes are engaged in domestic services, in fishing, or in navigation.

Whether the state of Martinico can be improved?

The

The first class consists entirely of rich people. Their culture is carried to the highest degree of perfection, and their circumstances enable them to keep it up in the flourishing state to which they have brought it. Even the expences they must be at for replacing deficiencies, are not so great as those of the less wealthy planter, as the slaves born upon these plantations supply the place of those destroyed by time and labour.

The second class, which is that of planters in easy circumstances, have but half the hands that would be necessary to get a fortune equal to that of the opulent proprietors. If they could even afford to buy the number of slaves they want, they would be deterred from it by fatal experience. Nothing is attended with such bad consequences as putting a great number of fresh negroes at once upon a plantation. The sicknesses those miserable wretches are liable to, from a change of climate and diet; the trouble of inuring them to a kind of labour which they are not accustomed to, and which they dislike, cannot but disgust a planter, from the constant and laborious attention he must pay to this training up of men for the cultivation of land. The most active proprietor is he who is able to increase his works by one sixth of the number of slaves every year. Thus the second class might acquire fifteen hundred slaves yearly, if the neat produce of their lands would admit of it. But they must not expect to meet with credit. The merchants in France do not seem disposed to trust them; and those who circulated their stock in the colony, no sooner saw it useless or in danger, than they removed it to Europe, or to St. Domingo.

The third class, which is but one remove from indigence, cannot amend their situation by any means to be devised in the ordinary course of trade. It is much if they can subsist by themselves. The beneficent hand of government can alone impart life to them, and make them useful to the state, by lending them, without interest, the sums they may want, to raise their plantations in due season. These might venture upon fresh negroes, without the inconveniences which belong to the second class, because each planter hav-

ing

having fewer slaves to look after, will be able to attend more closely to those he may purchase.

The fourth class, who deal in articles of less consequence than sugars, do not stand in need of such powerful helps; to recover that ease and plenty from which they are fallen, by war, hurricanes, and other misfortunes. Could these two last classes but make an acquisition of fifteen hundred slaves every year, it would be sufficient to raise them to that degree of prosperity to which their industry naturally intitles them.

Thus, Martinico might hope to revive her drooping plantations, and to recover her ancient splendour, to which her diligence had raised her, if she could get a yearly accession of three thousand negroes. But she is not in a condition to pay for these recruits; and the reasons of her inability are well known. She owes the mother country, for balance of trade, about 1,000,000 livres (*a*). A series of misfortunes has obliged her to borrow 4,000,000 livres (*b*) of the merchants settled in the town of St. Peter's. The engagements she has entered into, on account of divided inheritances, and those she has contracted for the purchase of a number of plantations, have made her insolvent. This desperate situation will neither allow her the means of retrieving soon, nor the ambition of pursuing that road to fortune which once lay open to her.

ADD to this, that she stands exposed to invasion. But, though there are an hundred places where the enemy may land, yet they will never make the attempt. It would be to no purpose, because of the impossibility of bringing up the artillery and ammunition, across such a rugged country, to Fort Royal, which defends the whole colony. To succeed in such an attempt, the enemy must direct their course to this part of the island.

Whether Martinico can be conquered.

In the front of this strong place, is a famous harbour, situated on the side of a large bay, that cannot be entered without many tackings, which must decide the fate of any ship that is forced to avoid fighting.

(*a*) 43,750 l.

(*b*) 175,000 l.

ing. If she happens to be unrigged, or is a bad sailor, or meets with some accident, from the variations of the squalls of wind, the currents, or whirlpools, she will fall into the hands of an assailant that is a better sailor, and may be very easily boarded. The fortress itself may become an useless and inglorious spectator of the defeat of a whole squadron, as it has been an hundred times of the taking of merchant ships.

The inside of the harbour is much injured on account of the hulks of several ships that have been sunk there, to keep out the English in the last war. These vessels have been taken up again: But it will still require a great deal of expence to remove the heaps of sand which are gathered about them, and to put matters in the same state they were before. This work will not admit of any delay; for the port, though not very spacious, is the only one where large ships can winter; the only one where they will find masts, sails, cables, and excellent water, which is brought there with ease from the distance of a league by a very well-contrived canal.

An enemy will always land near to this harbour, and it is impossible to prevent it, whatever precautions may be taken. The war could not long be carried on against them in the field, and the people would soon be reduced to shut themselves up in their fortifications.

They formerly had no other fortification than Fort Royal, where immense sums had been ignorantly buried under a ridge of mountains. All the knowledge of the ablest engineers has never been sufficient to give any degree of strength or solidity to works erected at random, by the most unskilful hands, and without any sort of plan. They have been obliged to content themselves with adding a covered way, a rampart, and flanks, to such parts of the place as would admit of it. But the work of the most consequence has been to cut into the rock, which easily gives way, and to dig subterraneous rooms, which are airy, wholesome, and fit to keep warlike stores and provisions, as also to shelter the sick, and to defend the soldiers, and such of the inhabitants whose attachment to their country would

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would inspire them with courage to defend the colony. It has been thought, that men who were sure of finding a safe retreat in these caverns, after having exposed their lives on the ramparts, would soon forget their fatigues, and face the enemy with fresh vigour. This was a good thought, and must have been suggested, if not by a patriotic government, at least by some sensible and humane minister.

But the bravery this must inspire, could not be sufficient to preserve a place which is commanded on all sides. It was therefore thought adviseable to look out for some more advantageous situation; and this they found on the point called *Morne Garnier*, higher by thirty-five or forty feet than the highest tops of Patate, Tortenson, and Cartouche, all which overlook Fort Royal*.

Upon this eminence a citadel has been raised, consisting of four bastions. The bastions in front, the covered way, the reservoirs for water, the powder magazines; all these means of defence are ready, and the rest will soon be finished. Nothing will soon remain to be constructed but the lodging-rooms, and other necessary buildings. If even the redoubts and the batteries intended to force the enemy to make their descent at a greater distance than Casco Bay,

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where

* Besides this decisive advantage, *Morne Garnier* possesses many other means of defence. The ravines with which it is surrounded, are as numerous as the ditches, before which an handful of men have it in their power to keep an enemy in check for many days, before betaking themselves to the fortifications. It is an easy matter to cut three of its sides steep down, in such a manner as to render them inaccessible; which will reduce the assailants to the necessity of making no attacks but under lines consisting of a very narrow front. Indeed, it is easy to establish a certain communication between this *Morne* and Fort Royal.

From these considerations, an order has been given for building a fortress upon *Morne Garnier*. The covered way is already finished. Many other works are also far advanced; so that there is reason to expect they will be completely finished in two or three years time. When the place shall be put in that state of defence which has been determined upon, it will have cost about 7,000,000 of livres, (306,250 l. Sterling).

where they landed at the last invasion, should not have the effect that is expected from them; yet still the colony would be able to resist about three months. Fifteen hundred men will defend the *Morne Garnier* for thirty or six and thirty days against an army of fifteen thousand; and twelve hundred men will sustain themselves for twenty or five and twenty days in Fort Royal, which cannot be attacked till *Garnier* has been taken. This is all that can be expected from an expence of 7 or 8,000,000 livres (a).

Those who are of opinion, that the navy alone ought to protect the colonies, think that so considerable an expence has been misapplied. Unable as we were, say they, to erect fortifications, and to build ships at the same time, we ought to have preferred the indispensable to the secondary calls: And if the impetuosity in the character of the French disposes them to attack rather than to defend, we ought sooner to destroy than to erect fortresses; or, we should build none but ships, those moveable ramparts, which carry war with them, instead of sitting still to wait for it. Every power that aims at trade, and the establishment of colonies, must have ships, which bring in men and wealth, and increase population and circulation; whereas, bastions and soldiers are only fit to consume men and provisions. All that the court of Versailles can expect from the expence she has been at in Martinico, is, that, if the island should be attacked by the only enemy she has to fear, there will be time enough to relieve her. The English proceed slowly in a siege; they always go on by rule, and nothing diverts them from completing any works that are conducive to the safety of the assailants; for they esteem the life of a soldier of more consequence than the loss of time. This maxim, so sensible in itself, is perhaps misapplied in the destructive climate of America; but it is the maxim of a people, whose soldiers are engaged in the service of the state, not hirelings paid by their prince. But, whatever be the future fate of Martinico, it is now time to inquire into the present state of Guadalupe.

THIS

(a) About 328,000 l., on an average.

THIS island, which is of an irregular form, may be about eighty leagues in circumference. It is parted in two by a small arm of the sea, which is not above two leagues long, and from fifteen to forty fathom broad. This canal, known by the name of the Salt River, is navigable, but will only carry vessels of fifty tons burthen.

Calamities experienced by the French who first settled at Guadalupe.

That part of the island which gives its name to the whole colony, is, towards the centre, full of craggy rocks, and so cold, that nothing will grow there but fern, and some usefess shrubs covered with moss. On the top of these rocks, a mountain called *La Souphriere*, or the Brimstone mountain, rises to an immense height into the middle region of the air. It exhales, through various openings, a thick black smoke, intermixed with sparks that are visible by night. From all these hills flow numberless springs, which fertilize the plains below, and moderate the burning heat of the climate, by a refreshing stream, so celebrated, that the galleons which formerly used to touch at the Windward Islands, had orders to renew their provision with this pure and salubrious water. Such is that part of the island properly called Guadalupe. That which is commonly called Grande Terre, has not been so much favoured by Nature. It is, indeed, less rugged, and more level; but it wants springs and rivers. The soil is not so fertile, or the climate so wholesome or so pleasant.

This island had not been possessed by any European nation, when five hundred and fifty Frenchmen, led on by two gentlemen named Loline and Dupleffis, arrived there from Dieppe on the 28th of June 1635. They had been very imprudent in their preparations. Their provisions were so ill chosen, that they were spoiled in the passage; and they had shipped so few, that they were exhausted in two months. They were supplied with none from the mother country. St. Christopher's, whether from scarcity or design, refused to spare them any; and their first attempts in husbandry they made in the country, could not as yet afford them any thing. No resource was left for the colony but from

the savages; but the superfluities of a people, who cultivate but little, and therefore had never laid up any stores, could not be very considerable. The new comers, not content with what the savages might bring of their own accord, came to a resolution to plunder them; and hostilities commenced on the 6th of January 1636.

The Caribs, not thinking themselves in a condition openly to resist an enemy who had so much the advantage from the superiority of their arms, destroyed their own provisions and plantations, and retired to Grande Terre, or to the neighbouring islands. From thence the most desperate came over to the island from which they had been driven, and concealed themselves in the thickest of the forests. In the day-time, they shot with their poisoned arrows, or knocked down with their clubs, all the French who were scattered about for hunting or fishing. In the night, they burned the houses, and destroyed the plantations of their unjust spoilers.*

A dreadful famine was the consequence of this kind of war. The colonists were reduced to graze in the fields, to eat their own excrements, and to dig up dead bodies for their subsistence. Many who had been slaves at Algiers, detested the hands that had broken their fetters; and all of them cursed their existence. It was in this manner that they atoned for the crime of their invasion, till the government of Aubert brought about a peace with the savages at the end of the year 1640. When we consider the injustice of the hostilities which the Europeans have committed all over America, we are almost tempted to rejoice at their misfortunes, and at all the judgments that pursue those inhuman oppressors. We are ready to renounce the ties that bind us to the inhabitants of our own hemisphere, change our connections, and contract beyond the seas, with the savage Indians, an alliance, which unites all mankind, that of misfortune and compassion*.

But

* They become our brethren, our friends, even by misfortune. Mankind take compassion upon them; they wish to relieve them. Pity revolts against exterminators; and Equity expects nothing from the tyranny of a government, which hugs itself at the success of robberies perpetrated under its authority or command.

But the remembrance of hardships endured in an invaded island, proved a powerful incitement to the cultivation of all articles of immediate necessity, which afterwards induced an attention to those of luxury consumed in the mother-country. The few inhabitants who had escaped the calamities they had drawn upon themselves, were soon joined by some discontented colonists from St. Christopher's, some Europeans fond of novelty, some sailors tired of navigation, and by some sea captains, who prudently chose to commit to the care of a grateful soil the treasures they had saved from the dangers of the sea. But still the prosperity of Guadalupe was stopped or impeded by obstacles arising from its situation.

THE facility with which the pirates from the neighbouring islands could carry off their cattle, their slaves, and even their very crops, frequently brought them into a very ruinous situation. Intestine broils, arising from jealousies of authority, often disturbed the quiet of the planters. The adventurers who went over to the Windward Islands, despising a land that was fitter for agriculture than for naval expeditions, were easily drawn to Martinico, by its numerous and convenient harbours. The protection of those intrepid pirates, brought to that island all the traders who flattered themselves that they might buy up the spoils of the enemy at a low price, and all the planters who thought they might safely give themselves up to peaceful labours. This quick population could not fail of introducing the civil and military government of the Leeward islands into Martinico. From that time, the French ministry attended more seriously to this than to the other colonies, which were not so immediately under their direction; and, hearing of nothing but this island, they turned all their encouragements into that channel.

The colony of Guadalupe makes no great progress.

It was owing to this preference, that, in 1700, the whole population of Guadalupe was but 3825 white people; 325 savages, free negroes, or mulattoes; and

6725 slaves, many of whom were Caribs. Her cultures were reduced to 60 small plantations of sugar, 66 of indigo, a little cocoa, and a great deal of cotton. The cattle amounted to 1620 horses and mules, and 3699 head of horned cattle. This was the fruit of sixty years labour. But her future progress was as rapid as her first attempts had been slow.

At the end of the year 1755, the colony was peopled with 9643 whites, and 41,140 slaves, men, women, and children. Her saleable commodities were the produce of 334 sugar plantations; 15 plots of indigo; 46,840 stems of cocoa; 11,700 of tobacco; 2,257,725 of coffee; 12,748,447 of cotton. For her provision she had 29 squares of rice or maize, and 1219 of potatoes or yams; 2,028,520 banana trees; and 32,577,950 trenches of cassava. These details are the most essential parts of the history of America, so far as it concerns Europe. Cato the Censor would have recorded them; and Charlemagne would have read them eagerly. Who should be ashamed to attend to them? Let us then pursue these useful disquisitions. The cattle of Guadalupe consisted of 4946 horses; 2924 mules; 125 asses; 13,716 head of horned cattle; 11,162 sheep or goats; and 2444 hogs. Such was the state of Guadalupe, when it was conquered by the English, in the month of April 1759.

France lamented this loss; but the colony had reason to comfort themselves for this disgrace. During a siege of three months, they had seen their plantations destroyed, the buildings that served to carry on their works burnt down, and some of their slaves carried off. Had the enemy been forced to retreat after all these devastations, the island was undone. Deprived of all assistance from the mother-country, which was not in a condition to send her any succours, and expecting nothing from the Dutch, who, on account of their neutrality, came into her roads, because she had nothing to offer them in exchange, she could never have subsisted till the season of the ensuing Harvest.

THE conquerors delivered them from these apprehensions. The English, indeed, are no merchants in their colonies. The proprietors of lands, who mostly reside in Europe, send their representatives whatever they want, and draw the whole produce of their estates by the return of their ship. An agent, settled in some sea port of Great Britain, is intrusted with the furnishing the plantation, and receiving the produce. This was impracticable at Guadalupe; and the conquerors, in this respect, were obliged to adopt the custom of the conquered. The English, informed of the advantage the French made of their trade with their colonies, hastened, in imitation of them, to send their ships to the conquered island, and so multiplied their expeditions, that they overstocked the market, and sank the price of all European goods. The colonist bought them at a very low price, and in consequence of this superabundance, obtained long delays for the payment.

The English conquer Guadalupe and raise the island to the greatest degree of prosperity.

To this necessary credit was soon added another, arising from speculation, which enabled the colony to fulfil its engagements. A great number of negroes were carried thither, to hasten the growth, and raise the value of the plantations. It has been said, in an hundred memorials, copied from each other, that the English had stocked Guadalupe with 30,000, during the four years and three months that they remained masters of the island. The registers of the custom-houses, which may be depended on, as they could have no inducement to impose upon us, attest that the number was no more than 18,721. This was sufficient to give the victorious nation well-grounded hopes of reaping great advantages from their new conquest. But their ambition was frustrated, and the colony, with its dependencies, was restored to its former possessors in July 1763.

By the dependencies of Guadalupe, must be understood several small islands, which being included within the jurisdiction of her government, fell with her into the hands of the English. Such is the Descada, which seems

seems to have been detached from Guadalupe by the sea, and is only separated by a small canal. It is a kind of rock, where nothing will grow but cotton. We are not certain of the precise time it was first inhabited, but this little settlement is certainly not of a long standing.

The Saintes, three leagues distant from Guadalupe, are two very small islands, which, with another yet smaller, make a triangle, and a tolerable harbour. Thirty Frenchmen were sent thither in 1648, but were soon obliged to evacuate it, on account of an excessive drought, which dried up their only spring, before they had time to make any reservoirs. A second attempt was made in 1652, when more durable plantations were established, which now yield fifty thousand weight of coffee, and ninety thousand of cotton.

This is inconsiderable; but it is more than the produce of St. Bartholomew, which was peopled with fifty Frenchmen in 1648. They were all murdered in 1656 by a troop of Caribs from St. Vincent's and Dominica, and were not replaced for a long while after. In 1753, the colonists were no more than 170 in number, and their whole fortune consisted in 54 slaves, and 64,000 cocoa trees. Since the last peace, the population of the white people has increased to 400, and that of the blacks to 500. The plantations have increased in the same proportions. This small island is very hilly, and excessively barren; but it has the convenience of a good harbour. The wretchedness of the inhabitants is so well known, that the English privateers, which frequently put in there during the late wars, have always paid punctually for what few refreshments they could spare them, though the miserable inhabitants were too weak to compel them. There is then some humanity left even in the breast of enemies and pirates; man is not naturally cruel; and only becomes so from fear or from interest. The armed pirate, who plunders a vessel richly laden, is not destitute of equity, nor even of compassion, for a set of poor defenceless islanders.

Marigalante was wrested from her natural inhabitants in 1648. The French, who had forcibly established themselves there, were long annoyed by the savages

savages of the neighbouring islands, but at last are left peaceable possessors of a land they have cultivated, after they had unpeopled it. This island is not large, but very fruitful; it cultivates, twenty-one sugar plantations, 7,000 cocoa trees, 562,700 stems of coffee, and 4,621,700 of cotton. If these frequent computations are tiresome to an indolent reader, who does not like to take account of his income, lest he should find he must set bounds to his expences, it is to be hoped they will be less so to political calculators, who find the exact measure of the strength of a state in the population and produce of lands, and are by these means the better enabled to compare the natural resources of the several nations. It is only by an exact register of this kind, that we can judge of the present state of the maritime and trading powers that have settlements in America. In this case, accuracy constitutes the whole merit of the work, and the reader must excuse inelegance in favour of real utility. The publick is already sufficiently amused and imposed upon by eloquent and ingenious descriptions of distant countries: it is now time to investigate truth, to compare the several histories of these countries, and to find out what they now are, rather than what they formerly were. For the history of what is past is of little more consequence to the present age, than the history of what is to come. Let us then again observe, that no one should think it strange, that we so often repeat the numeration of people and cattle, of lands and their produce; in a word, that we should so frequently enter into disquisitions which, though they may appear dry, are, in fact, the natural foundations of society. Why then should we be disgusted at seeing these things in a work which shows us our riches? Let us, therefore, resume the subject, and compute the wealth of Guadalupe.

By the survey taken in 1767, this island, including the lesser settlements above-mentioned, contains 11,863 white people, men, women, and children; 752 free blacks and mulattoes; 72,761 slaves; which makes, in all, a population of 85,376 souls.

The cattle consists of 5,060 horses; 4,854 mules; 111 asses;

111 asses; 17,378 head of horned cattle; 14,895 sheep or goats; and 2,669 hogs.

The provision is 30,476,218 trenches of cassava; 2,819,262 banana trees; 2,118 squares of land planted with yams and potatoes.

The plantations contain 72 arnotto trees; 327 of cassia; 134,292 of cocoa; 5,881,176 of coffee; 12,156,769 of cotton; 21,474 squares of land planted with sugar canes.

The woods occupy 22,097 squares of land. There are 20,247 in meadows; and 6,405 are uncultivated or forsaken.

Only 1582 plantations grow cotton, coffee, cocoa, and provisions of eatables. Sugar is made but in 401. These sugar-works employ 140 water-mills, 263 turned by oxen, and 11 wind-mills.

The produce of Guadalupe, including what is poured in from the small islands under her dominion, ought to be very considerable. But in 1768, it yielded to the mother country no more than 140,418 quintals of fine sugars; 23,603 quintals of raw sugars; 34,205 quintals of coffee; 11,955 quintals of cotton; 456 quintals of cocoa; 1,884 quintals of ginger; 2,529 quintals of logwood; 24 chests of sweetmeats; 165 chests of liqueurs; 34 casks of rum; and 1,202 undressed skins. All these commodities were sold in the colony only for 7,103,838 livres (*a*), and the merchandise they have received from France, has cost them but 4,523,884 livres (*b*). It is easy to judge from hence, how great a part of the produce has been fraudulently exported, since it has been shown, that the crops of Guadalupe are more plentiful than those of Martinico.

The reasons for this superiority are obvious. Guadalupe employs a greater number of slaves upon the plantations than Martinico, which, being at once a trading and a planting island, engages many of her negroes in the towns and among the shipping. There are fewer children in Guadalupe, because the fresh negroes brought to the new-erected works, are all adults, or at least able to work, and the African women seldom breed

(*a*) 310,792 l. 18 s. 3 d.

(*b*) 197,919 l. 18 s. 6 d.

breed till the second year after their arrival in America. This may be owing to the change of climate and food affecting their constitutions, or, possibly, to a kind of reserve which they are more susceptible of than they are generally thought to be. Lastly, a great many of those blacks have been placed upon fresh lands; and ground newly cleared always yields more than that which is exhausted by long tillage.

But, if we may trust to some observers, the colony must expect that her plantations will decrease. They maintain, that that part of the island properly called Guadalupe, had long since attained the utmost pitch of increase; and that Grande Terre, almost all of which is newly cleared, furnishes three fifths of the produce of the whole settlement. But, it is impossible that this part of the island can keep up to that flourishing state, to which a lucky chance has brought it. The land is naturally barren, and already exhausted by forced culture; and it is the more exposed to the droughts, so common in this climate, as there is hardly a tree left. Besides, the cultivation of them is attended with difficulty and cost, and the crops can only be kept up, by a daily increase of labour and expence, and by constantly returning into the ground the neat produce of each harvest.

Yet many are of opinion, that Guadalupe may augment her income by one sixth, and that the time of this increase is not far distant. The colony has no considerable debts. Having fewer wants than the richer islands, where affluence has, long since, created new desires and a new taste, the inhabitants can spare the more for the improvement of their lands. Their situation, in the midst of the English and Dutch settlements, gives them an opportunity of running one half of their sugars and cottons at a higher price than they would sell for to the French captains, to purchase slaves and other articles in exchange at a cheaper rate. From these concurring circumstances, it is not unlikely that Guadalupe will soon rise to the greatest prosperity, without the assistance, and in spite of the obstacles government has thrown in the way.

The

THE flourishing state to which Guadalupe had been raised by the English, when they restored it at the peace, excited a general surprise. The mother-country beheld it with that kind of consideration and respect which opulence inspires. Hitherto this, as well as all the other Windward islands, had been subordinate to Martinico. It was rescued from this dependence, by appointing a governor and an intendant to preside over it. These new administrators, desirous of signalizing their arrival by some innovation, instead of letting the commodities of this island return into the old track, laid a plan for conveying them directly to Europe. This scheme was by no means disagreeable to the inhabitants, who owed Martinico two millions, which they were in no haste to pay; and it was contrived that the ministry at home should adopt it. From that time, all intercourse was strictly prohibited between the two colonies, which became as great strangers to each other, as if they had belonged to rival, or even to hostile powers.

The immediate connections of Guadalupe with France, had been hitherto confined to six or seven ships every year. This number was increased, but not sufficiently to ease the colony of the whole of her produce. This scheme was carried into execution with too much haste. It should have been done very gradually, and with much caution; for, certainly, most innovations in politicks require to be introduced and conducted with moderation. The harbours of Guadalupe are but bad, the coasting trade difficult, and the goods frequently damaged in loading and unloading. These, and other reasons, had deterred the merchants of the mother-country from opening a direct trade with the colony, notwithstanding the inconveniences and charges attending an indirect one. There was a degree of prejudice in this; but many precautions were necessary to induce them to get rid of it. It was necessary to entice European ships to come to the colony by some privileges and indulgences, which might balance the disadvantages

advantages that kept them away. With this kind of management the intended revolution would have been brought about gradually and insensibly. In short, the French ships should have been encouraged, in order to keep off those of Martinico, not those of Martinico driven away, to bring in the French ships, which might possibly never arrive.

Such was the commercial interest, singly considered; but, perhaps, it might come in competition with political interests of much greater importance. This is what we shall now examine.

France has been hitherto unable effectually to protect her own colonies, or to annoy those of her most formidable rival. This double advantage can only be procured by a navy equal to that of a power, which openly declares itself our natural enemy. Till that period arrives, which, from our present situation, seems to be more and more remote, it concerns us, at least, to put our American colonies in a condition to provide for themselves in case of a war. This they were able to do, when Martinico was the centre of all the windward settlements. From this island, full of traders and seamen, and the most happily situated of all the French islands, with regard to the winds that blow in these latitudes, were sent out constant supplies of men, arms, and provisions, which reached the other colonies in twenty-four hours, with a moral certainty of not being intercepted, notwithstanding the number and strength of the squadrons destined to cut off this communication.

Nor was this all. Swarms of privateers, sent out from Martinico, made it impossible for the British trade to proceed without a convoy; and, as the convoys could not be had in a constant succession, so as to bring a regular supply to a climate where provisions will not keep long, the English islands were often reduced to great scarcity. The provinces of North-America endeavoured, indeed, to make up this deficiency; but as the cargoes sold so cheap, that they could not afford a convoy, the French privateers were sure to carry off two fifths of their trade with the southern colonies. And, indeed, all the vigilance and

skill of the English could not prevent the Martinico privateers, during the last war, from taking fourteen hundred vessels.

All these advantages of Martinico, in which Guadalupe had its share, and which greatly contributed to the victualling of both islands, and to distress the enemy's settlements, will be lost, by the separation made by the mother-country between the colonies. We shall no longer see there any merchants, or seamen, or stationed ships; and, if a war should break out, it will be impossible to fit out the smallest armament in those parts. It is the business of the court of Versailles to judge, whether the direct navigation from the ports of France to Guadalupe can make amends for so great a sacrifice.

Measures taken by France for the defence of Guadalupe.

BUT can France be assured of enjoying a long and quiet possession of this island? If the enemy that might attack the colony, chose only to ravage Grande Terre, and carry off the slaves and cattle from thence, it would be impossible to hinder them, or even to make them suffer for it, unless an army was opposed to them. Fort Lewis, which defends this part of the settlement, is but a wretched star fort, incapable of much resistance. All that could possibly be expected, would be, to prevent the devastation from extending any farther. The nature of the country presents several more or less fortunate situations, in which the progress of an assailer may be stopped with security, whatever his courage or his forces may be. He would, therefore, be forced to reembark, and proceed to the attack of what is properly called Guadalupe.

The landing of the enemy could be effected nowhere but at the bay of the Three Rivers, and at that of the Bailiff; or, rather, these two places would be most favourable to the success of his enterprize, because they would bring them nearer than any other to Fort St. Charles in Basse-terre, where they would have fewer difficulties to encounter.

Whichever

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Whichever of these landings the enemy may choose, they will find nothing more than a spot covered with trees, intersected with rivers, hollow ways, narrow passes, and steep ascents, which they must march over, exposed to the French fire. When, by the superiority of their forces, they have surmounted these difficulties, they will be stopped by the eminence of the great camp. This is a platform surrounded by Nature, with the river Galleon, and with dreadful ravines, to which art has added parapets, barbettes, flanks and embrasures, to direct the artillery in the most proper manner. This intrenchment, though formidable, must, notwithstanding, be forced. It is not to be imagined that an intelligent general would ever leave such a post as this behind him: His convoys would be too much exposed, and he could not get up what would be necessary for carrying on the siege of Fort St. Charles, without much difficulty.

If those who were first employed in fortifying Guadalupe, had understood the art of war, or even been engineers, they would not have failed choosing the position between the river Cense and the river Galleon, for erecting their fortifications. The place then would have had, towards the sea-side, a front, which would have inclosed a harbour capable of containing forty sail of ships, which would have annoyed the enemy's fleet, without being themselves in the least exposed. The fronts towards the rivers Galleon and Cense, would have been inaccessible, being placed upon the summit of two very steep ascents. The fourth front would have been the only place open to an attack; and it would have been an easy matter to strengthen that as much as might have been thought proper.

By choosing the present position of Fort St. Charles, the works which were constructed, ought at least to have flanked each other, and to have fired off alternately, from the sea and from the heights. But the principles of fortification were so much neglected, that the fire was pointed entirely in a wrong direction, that the internal works were in all parts open to the view, and that the revetements might be battered from the bottom.

Such was the condition of Fort St. Charles, when, in 1764, they began to think of putting it in a proper state of defence. Perhaps, it might have been best to have destroyed it totally, and to have placed the fortifications on the position just pointed out. They contented themselves, however, with covering the wretched fort constructed by unskilful persons, with out-works; adding two bastions towards the sea-side; a good covered way, which goes all round with the glacis, partly cut, and partly in a gentle slope; two large places of arms with hollow angles, having each a good redoubt, and behind these good tenailles, with caponieres and posterns of communication with the body of the place; two redoubts, one on the prolongation of the capital of one of the two places of arms, and the other at the extremity of an excellent intrenchment made along the river Galleon, the platform of which is defended by the cannon from another intrenchment, made on the top of the bank of the other side of the same river; large and deep ditches, a reservoir for water, and a powder magazine, bomb proof; in a word, a sufficient quantity of works underground to lodge a third part of the garrison. All these out-works, well contrived, being added to the fort, will enable an active and experienced commander, with two thousand men, to hold out a siege of two months, and perhaps more. But, whatever may be the resistance that Guadalupe can oppose to the attacks of the enemy, it is time to pass on to St. Domingo.

*Settlement of
the French at
St. Domingo.*

THIS island is sixty leagues in length; its mean breadth about thirty; and its circumference three hundred and fifty, or six hundred in coasting round the several bays. It is parted lengthways, from east to west, by a ridge of mountains, covered with wood, which, rising gradually, exhibit the finest prospect imaginable. Several of these mountains were formerly full of mines, and, perhaps, are so still; others are fit for culture. Almost all of them form delicious and temperate valleys; but in the plains where the soil is very fertile, the air

air is so scorching as to be almost intolerable, especially in those places by the sea-side where the coast runs narrow, between the water and the back of the mountains, and is exposed to a double reflection of the sun, both from the rocks and the waves.

Spain was the sole proprietor of this large possession, when some English and French, who had been driven out of St. Christopher's, took refuge there in 1630. Though the southern coast, where they first settled, was in a manner forsaken, they considered, that, being liable to be attacked by the common enemy, it was but prudent to secure a retreat. For this purpose, they pitched upon Tortuga, a small island within two leagues of the great one; and twenty-five Spaniards who were left to guard it, retired on the first summons.

The adventurers of both nations, now absolute masters of an island eight leagues in length, and two in breadth, found a pure air, but no river, and few springs. The mountains were covered with choice woods, and the fertile plains only wanted the hand of the cultivator. The northern coast appeared to be inaccessible, but the southern had an excellent harbour, commanded by a rock, which required only a battery of cannon to defend the entrance of the island.

This happy situation soon brought to Tortuga a multitude of those people who are in search either of fortune or of liberty. The most moderate applied themselves to the culture of tobacco, which grew into repute, whilst the more active went to hunt the buffaloes at St. Domingo, and sold their hides to the Dutch. The most intrepid went out to cruize, and performed such daring feats as will be long remembered.

This settlement alarmed the court of Madrid. Judging, by the losses they had already sustained, of the misfortunes they had still to expect, they gave orders for the destruction of the new colony. The commander of the galleons chose, for executing his commission, the time when the greatest part of the brave inhabitants of Tortuga were out at sea, or a-hunting, and with that barbarity which was then so familiar to his nation, carried off or put to the sword all those who were left at home. He then withdrew, without leaving any garri-

son, fully persuaded that such a precaution was needless, after the vengeance he had taken. But he soon found that cruelty is not the way to secure dominion.

The adventurers, informed of what had been doing at Tortuga, and hearing at the same time that a body of five hundred men, destined to harass them, was getting ready at St. Domingo, judged that the only way to escape the impending ruin, was to put an end to that anarchy in which they lived. They therefore gave up personal independence to social safety, and made choice of one Willes, an Englishman, who had distinguished himself on many occasions by his prudence and valour, to be at their head. Under the guidance of this chief, at the latter end of 1638, they retook an island which they had possessed for eight years, and fortified it, that they might not lose it again.

The French soon felt the effects of national partiality. Willes having sent for as many of his countrymen as would enable him to give laws, treated the rest as subjects. Such is the natural progress of dominion; in this manner most monarchies have been formed. Companions in exile, war, or piracy, have chosen a leader, who soon usurps the authority of a master. At first he shares the power of the spoils with the strongest, till the multitude, crushed by the few, embolden the chief to assume the whole power to himself, and then monarchy degenerates into despotism. But such a series of revolutions can only take place in many years in great states. An island of sixteen leagues square is of too much consequence to be peopled with slaves. The commander De Poincy, governor-general of the Windward islands, hearing of the tyranny of Willes, immediately sent forty Frenchmen from St. Christopher's, who collected fifty more on the coast of St. Domingo. They landed at Tortuga, and having joined their countrymen on the island, they altogether summoned the English to withdraw. The English, disconcerted at such an unexpected and vigorous act, and not doubting but so much haughtiness was supported by a much greater force than it really was, evacuated the island, never more to return.

The

The Spaniards were more obstinate. They suffered so much from the depredations of the pirates which were daily sent out from Tortuga, that they thought their peace, their honour, and their interest, were alike concerned in getting that island once more into their own power. Three times they recovered it, and were as often driven out again. At last it remained in the hands of the French, in 1659, and they kept it till they were so firmly established at St. Domingo, as to disregard so small a settlement.

Their progress, however, was but slow; and they did not draw the attention of the mother-country till 1665. Huntsmen, indeed, and pirates, were continually seen hovering about from one island to another; but the number of planters, who are properly the only colonists, did not exceed four hundred. The government was sensible of the necessity of multiplying them; and the care of this difficult work was committed to a gentleman of Anjou, named Bertrand Dogeron.

THIS man, whom Nature had formed to be great in himself, independent of the smiles or frowns of fortune, had served fifteen years in a regiment of marines, when he went over to America in 1656. With the best contrived plans, he failed in his first attempts; but the fortitude he showed in his misfortunes, made his virtues the more conspicuous; and the address he discovered in extricating himself, heightened the opinion already entertained of his genius. The esteem and attachment with which he had inspired the French at St. Domingo and Tortuga, induced the government to intrust him with the care of directing, or rather of settling that colony.

The execution of this project was attended with many difficulties. It was necessary to subdue a lawless crew, who till then had lived in a state of the most absolute independence; to reconcile to labour, a troop of plunderers, who delighted in nothing but rapine and idleness; to prevail upon men, accustomed to trade freely with all nations, to submit to the privileges

Measures taken by the French to render this colony advantageous.

leges of an exclusive company formed in 1664 for all the French settlements. When this was effected, it then became necessary, by holding out the advantages of an indulgent government, to allure new inhabitants into a country which had been traduced as a bad climate, and which was not yet known to be so fertile as it really was.

Dogeron, contrary to the general opinion, was in hopes of success. A long intercourse with the men he was to govern, had taught him how they were to be dealt with; and his sagacity could suggest, or his honest soul adopt, no method of alluring them but what was noble and just. The free-booters were determined to go in search of more advantageous latitudes; he detained them, by relinquishing to them that share of the booty which his post intitled him to, and by obtaining for them from Portugal, commissions for attacking the Spaniards, even after they had made peace with France. This was the only way to make these men friends to their country, who otherwise would have turned enemies, rather than have renounced the hopes of plunder. The buccaneers, or huntsmen, who only wished to raise a sufficiency to erect habitations, found him ready to advance them money without interest, or to procure them some by his credit. As for the planters, whom he preferred to all the other colonists, he gave them every possible encouragement within the reach of his industrious activity.

These happy alterations required only to be made permanent. The governor wisely considered, that women could alone cement the happiness of the men, and the welfare of the colony, by promoting population. There was not one female on the new settlement. He therefore sent for some. Fifty came over from France, and were soon disposed of to the best bidders. Soon after, a like number arrived, and were obtained on still higher terms. This was the only way to gratify the most impetuous of all passions, without quarrels or bloodshed. The whole of the inhabitants expected to see helpmates come from their own country, to soften and to share their fate. But they were disappointed.

No.

No more were sent over, except women of no character, who used to engage themselves for three years in the service of the men. This method of loading the colony with the refuse of the mother-country, introduced such a profligacy of manners, that it became necessary to put a stop to so dangerous an expedient, but without substituting a better. By this neglect, St. Domingo lost a great many honest men, who could not live happy there, and was deprived of an increase of population, which might have proceeded from the colonists, who still preserved their attachment to the island. The colony has long felt, and, perhaps, feels to this day, the effects of so capital a fault.

Notwithstanding this error, Dogeron found means to increase the number of planters, which were only four hundred at his first coming, to fifteen hundred in four years time. His successes were daily increasing, when they were stopped at once in 1670, by an insurrection, which put the whole colony in a ferment. Nobody blamed him for an unfortunate accident, in which he certainly had not the least share.

When this upright man was appointed by the court of France to the government of Tortuga and St. Domingo, he could only prevail upon the inhabitants to acknowledge his authority, by giving them hopes that the ports under his jurisdiction should be open to foreigners. Yet such was the ascendent he gained over their minds, that by degrees he established in the colony the exclusive privilege of the company, which in time engrossed the whole trade. But this company became so elated with prosperity, as to be guilty of the injustice of selling their goods for two thirds more than had till then been paid to the Dutch. So destructive a monopoly made the inhabitants revolt. They took up arms, and after a year of disturbance they laid them down, upon condition that all French ships should be free to trade with them, paying five *per cent.* to the company at coming in and going out. Dogeron, who brought about this accommodation, availed himself of that circumstance to procure two ships, seemingly destined to convey his crops into Europe, but which

which in fact were more the property of his colonists than his own. Every one shipped his own commodities on board, allowing a moderate freight. On the return of the vessel, the generous governor caused the cargo to be exposed to publick view, and every one helped himself to what he wanted, not only at prime cost, but upon trust, without interest, and even without notes of hand. Dogeron had imagined he should inspire them with sentiments of probity and greatness of soul, by taking no other security than their own bare word. He was cut off by death in the midst of these parental offices, in 1675, leaving no other inheritance than an example of patriotism, and of every humane and social virtue.

His nephew Pouancey succeeded rather to the duties than to the honours of his place. With the same qualifications as Dogeron, he was not so great a man, because he followed his steps more from imitation than from natural disposition. Yet the undiscerning multitude placed an equal confidence in both, and both had the honour and happiness to establish the colony upon a firm footing, without either laws or soldiers. Their natural good sense, and their known integrity, determined all differences to the satisfaction of both parties; and publick order was maintained by that authority which is naturally attendant upon personal merit.

So wise a constitution could not be lasting; it required too much virtue to make it so. In 1684, there was so visible an alteration, that, in order to establish a due subordination at St. Domingo, two administrators were called in from Martinico, where good policy was already in a great measure settled. These legislators appointed courts of judicature in the several districts, accountable to a superior council at Little Goyave. In process of time, this jurisdiction growing too extensive, a like tribunal was erected, in 1702, at Cape St. Francis, for the northern districts.

All these innovations could hardly be introduced without some opposition. It was to be feared that the hunters and pirates, who composed the bulk of the people, averse from the restraints that were going to be

be laid upon them, would go over to the Spaniards and to Jamaica, allured by the prospect of great advantages. The planters themselves were under some temptation of this kind, as their trade was burdened with so many duties, that they were forced to sell their commodities to very little advantage. The former were won by persuasions, the latter by the prospect of a change in their situation, which was truly desperate.

Skins had been the first article of exportation from St. Domingo, as being the only things the buccaneers brought home. Tobacco was afterwards added by the culture of lands, and it was sold to great advantage to all nations. This trade was soon confined by an exclusive company, which, indeed, was in a short time abolished, but with no advantage for the sale of tobacco, since that was farmed out. The inhabitants, hoping to meet with some favour from government, as a reward for their submission, offered to give the king a fourth part of all the tobacco they should send into the kingdom, free of all charge, even of freight, upon condition they should have the free disposal of the other three-fourths. They made it appear, that this method would bring in a greater profit to the revenue than the 40 sols (*a*) *per cent.* which were paid by the farmers. This proposal, in itself so very reasonable, was rejected on account of some particular private interests. The colonists were exasperated by this harsh treatment; and luckily for them, they applied themselves wholly to the culture of indigo and cocoa. Cotton was a very promising article, because it had greatly enriched the Spaniards in former times; but they soon gave it up, for what reason is not known, and, in a few years, not a single shrub of cotton was to be seen.

Till then, all labour had been performed by hirelings, and by the poorest of the inhabitants. Some successful expeditions against the Spaniards, procured them a few negroes. Their number was a little increased by two or three French ships, and much more by prizes taken from the English during the war of 1688, by an invasion of Jamaica, from whence our people brought away three thousand blacks in 1694.

Without

(a) 1 s. 9 d.

Without slaves, the culture of sugar could not be undertaken; but they alone were not sufficient. Money was wanting to erect buildings, and to purchase utensils. The profit some inhabitants made with the freebooters, who were always successful in their expeditions, enabled them to employ the slaves. They therefore undertook the planting of those canes, which convey the gold of Mexico to nations, whose only mines are fruitful lands.

But the colony, which had still made a progress to the north and west, though it had lost some of its Europeans, amidst the devastations that preceded the peace of Reswick, was yet in no forwardness to the south. This part, which includes fifty leagues of sea-coast, had not an hundred inhabitants, all living in huts, and all extremely wretched. The government could fix upon no better expedient to make some advantages of so extensive and so fine a country, than to grant, in 1698, for the space of thirty years, the property of it to a company, which took the name of *St. Louis*. This company, in imitation of Jamaica and Curacao, was to open a contraband trade with the Spanish continent, and to clear the vast tract of land included in the grant. This last object, as it was the most important, was soon the only one that was attended to.

To advance the improvement of agriculture, the company freely granted lands to all who applied for them. Each person, according to his wants and abilities, obtained slaves, which they were to pay for in three years, the men at the rate of 600 livres (a), and the women at the rate of 450 livres (b). The same credit was given for goods, though they were to be delivered at the market price. The company engaged to buy up all the produce of the lands at the same rate as those commodities were sold for in the other parts of the island. The society which had made so many concessions, had no other method of indemnifying themselves, but by the exclusive right of buying and selling through the whole territory assigned to them. Even this dependence, oppressive to the colonist, was still softened by allowing him to take

(a) 26 l. 5 s.

(b) 19 l. 13 s. 9 d.

take where he pleased, whatever he was in want of, and to pay out of his provisions whatever he might have occasion to buy.

The monopolizer, as a torrent that is lost in the abyss itself has made, works his own ruin by his rapaciousness, by draining the country where he exercises his tyranny. The mismanagement of the oppressor, and the dejection of the oppressed, both concur to damp industry and trade in states subjected to exclusive privileges. The company of St Louis affords an instance, among many of the bad effects of such private combinations. It was ruined by the knavery and extravagance of its agents, nor was the territory committed to its care the better for all these losses. The plantations and people that were found there, when the Company gave up her rights to the government in 1720, were owing in a great measure to the interlopers.

It was during the long and bloody war begun on account of the Spanish succession, that this attempt had been made towards the improvement of the colony. It might have been expected to have made a speedy progress, when tranquillity was restored to both nations by the peace of Utrecht. These fair prospects were blasted by one of those calamities which it is not in the power of man to foresee. All the cocoa-trees upon the colony died in 1715. *Misfortunes that happen to the colony.* Degeron had planted the first in 1665. In process of time they had increased, especially in the narrow valleys to the westward. There were no less than twenty thousand upon some plantations, so that, though cocoa sold but for 5 sols * a pound, it was become a plentiful source of wealth.

This loss was amply compensated by cultivations of greater importance, when the colony was threatened with a total subversion. A considerable number of inhabitants, who had devoted twenty or thirty years labour, in a burning climate, to lay up a sufficiency to spend a comfortable old age in their native country, were gone over to France, with a sufficient fortune to enable them to pay off their debts and purchase estates.

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Their commodities were paid them in bank notes, which turned out to be of no use to them. This heavy stroke obliged them to return poor into an island from whence they had departed rich, and reduced them, in their old age, to solicit places, as stewards to the very people who had formerly been their servants. The sight of so many unfortunate persons inspired a general detestation, both of Law's scheme, and of the India Company, which was considered as accountable for this ill-concerted project of finance. This aversion, raised by mere compassion, was soon strengthened by very considerable personal interests.

In 1722, agents came from the India Company, which had obtained an exclusive grant of the negro trade, on condition that they should furnish two thousand negroes yearly. This was evidently a double misfortune for the colony, who, not expecting to get above one-fifth of the slaves they wanted, foresaw that even those would be sold at an extravagant price. Their discontent broke out into acts of the greatest violence. Some commissaries, who, by their insolent behaviour, had greatly heightened the dread naturally conceived of all monopoly, were forced to repair the seas. The buildings where they transacted their business were burnt to the ground. The ships that came to them from Africa, were either denied admittance into the harbour, or not suffered to dispose of their cargoes. The chief governor, who endeavoured to oppose these disturbances, saw his authority despised, and his orders disobeyed, as they were not enforced by any compulsive power. He was even put under arrest. All parts of the island rang with the cries of sedition, and the clashing of arms. It is hard to say how far these excesses would have been carried, had not government been so prudent as to yield. This extreme confusion lasted two years. At length, the inconveniencies resulting from anarchy, disposed the minds of all parties to peace, and tranquillity was restored without having recourse to desperate means.

From that period, no colony ever made such a good use of time as that of St Domingo. They advanced with the utmost rapidity to a prosperous state. The

two unfortunate wars which annoyed her seas, have only served to compress her strength, which has increased the more since the cessation of hostilities. A wound is soon healed when the constitution of the body is sound. Diseases themselves are a kind of remedies, which, by the expulsion of the vitiated humours, add new vigour to a robust habit of body. They restore the equilibrium of the whole frame, and impart to it a more regular and uniform motion. So war seems to strengthen and support national spirit in many states of Europe, which might be enervated and corrupted by the prosperity of commerce, and the enjoyments of luxury. The immense losses which almost equally attend victory and defeat, awaken industry and quicken labour. Nations will recover their former splendor, provided their rulers will let them follow their own bent, and not pretend to direct their steps. This principle is peculiarly applicable to France, where nothing is requisite for its prosperity but to give a free course to the activity of the inhabitants. Wherever nature leaves them at full liberty, they succeed in giving her powers their full scope. St Domingo affords a striking instance of what may be expected from a good soil and an advantageous situation, in the hands of Frenchmen.

THIS colony has 180 leagues of sea-coast, lying to the north, the west, and the south. The southern part extends from Cape Tiburon, to the point of Beata Cape, which takes in about fifty leagues of coast, more or less confined by the mountains. The Spaniards had built two large towns in that part, at the time of their prosperity, but forsook them in their decline. The vacant towns were not immediately occupied by the French, who might not think themselves in safety so near the town of St Domingo, where was concentrated the chief force of the nation upon whose ruins they were rising. Their privateers, who commonly assembled at the little island called Vache Island, to cruize upon the Castilians, and divide their spoils, emboldened them to begin a settlement on the neighbouring coast in 1673. It

*Present state
of this colony.*

was soon destroyed, and was not resumed till a good while after. The Company appointed to settle and extend this colony might be of some service to it; but the progress it made was chiefly owing to the English of Jamaica, and the Dutch of Curacao, who being advised to carry almost all their slaves to this place, bought up the produce of a land which they themselves contributed to improve. The merchants in France have at length opened their eyes, and, since the year 1740, they frequent that part which is the most distant of the colony, though the sailing out of this road is sometimes very tedious and difficult, on account of the winds.

The settlement that lies to windward of the rest is called Jaquemel. Though of a pretty long standing, it contains but forty-two houses. The soil of this and the neighbouring settlements is so hemmed in by the mountains, that no great opulence is to be expected from it; but, in another light, it merits the attention of government. Its situation is very convenient for the reception of any troops or warlike stores, which the mother-country might choose to convey to the colony, in time of war, and which would run great risques in taking the north side, that being the natural and constant station of the enemy's squadrons. Jaquemel may also be of great service in another view. The little Dutch island of Curacao affords, in times of hostilities, an inexhaustible store of provisions. Their privateers being strong and bold enough to beat the little corsairs of Jamaica, the only English vessels that have hitherto obstructed their operations, have poured an immense stock of provisions into the port of Jaquemel, during the late troubles. They will continue this supply as long as we please, provided we will but secure their landing by proper batteries, or by the protection of a frigate or two. This place will supply the western side of St Domingo, by a road of eight leagues only, which leads to Leogane and Port-au-Prince, and the southern side by small boats that can easily range the coast.

Whilst Jaquemel is the storehouse, St Lewis is the defence of the island. This town, built in the beginning

ning of the present century, lies at the bottom of a bay, which makes a tolerable harbour. It contains but forty houses, and seemed to be doomed to eternal wretchedness, having naturally no water to drink. Some Jews, who live without the gates of St Lewis, at length undertook to form an aqueduct, which they were obliged to construct at their own expence. This place is the seat of government, and receives the few men of war which appear in these latitudes. This is the only advantage it has; and by this it is enabled to protect the trade and the wealth of the Cayes, which lies ten leagues lower.

This town seems to have been, as it were, thrown at random in the bottom of a shallow bay, which grows more and more so every day, and has but three channels. The anchorage is so confined and so dangerous during the equinox, that ships which happen to be there at those seasons are frequently lost. The great quantity of mud brought thither by a torrent, called the south river, has increased to such a degree, that in thirty years time there will be no getting in. The canal, formed by the vicinity of Vache Island, is of no use but to obstruct navigation. The creeks in this place are the resort of the Jamaica corsairs. As they cruize there without sails, and can see without being seen, they always have the advantage of the wind over such vessels as are hindered by the violence and constant course of the winds from passing above the island. If any men of war should be forced to put into this bad harbour, the impossibility of surmounting this obstacle, and that of the currents, in order to get to windward of the island, would oblige them to follow the tract of merchant ships. Doubling, therefore, the point of Labacou, one after another, on account of the shoals, these ships would get between the land and the enemy's fire, with the disadvantage of the wind, and would infallibly be destroyed by an inferior squadron.

The town of Cayes is worthy of the harbour. It contains 280 houses, all sunk into swampy ground, and most of them surrounded with stagnant water. The air of this spot is foul and unwholesome; and, on this

account, as well as the badness of the harbour, it has often been wished, that the trade with the mother-country could be transferred to St Lewis. But the efforts that have been made to bring this about have hitherto been unsuccessful, and will always be so, for very obvious reasons.

The town of Cayes is surrounded with a plain nearly six leagues long, and four and a half broad. The ground, which is very even, extremely fruitful, and in every part fit for the culture of sugar, is well watered in many places, and may be so every where. Nothing is left to make it rival the plain of the Cape, but an equal number of slaves. These are daily increasing, and will soon multiply to such a number as to make the most of this fertile spot. So many advantages are an inducement to persons, who cross the seas merely in hopes of making a speedy fortune, to go directly to Cayes.

To pretend to thwart this partiality, would be to retard the progress of a good settlement to no purpose. Even the caprices of industry merit the indulgence of government. The least uneasiness in the trade creates distrust. Political and military reasonings will never prevail against those of interest. The colonies are influenced by no other rule. Wherever there is most money, there they direct their steps, and there they fix. Trade is a plant that only thrives in a soil of its own choosing. It starts at every kind of restraint. Forbidding the trade of Cayes, would be just as absurd a piece of tyranny, as ordering the dealers at a fair to quit their stalls.

All that the French ministry could reasonably propose, would be to fortify, and, in some measure, to cleanse this place. Both might be effected, by digging a ditch all round the town, and the rubbish would serve to fill up the marshes within. The ground being raised higher by this contrivance, would, of course, grow drier; the water, which would be brought down from the river into this deep ditch, would, with the help of some fortifications, secure the town from the attacks of the corsairs, and would even
afford

afford a temporary defence, and allow time to capitulate with a squadron.

We may, and ought to go further still. Why not allow an artificial harbour to an important mart, which will soon be stopped? The merchant ships that go and seek shelter in what is called the Flemish Bay, not two leagues to windward of Cayes, seem to point out this as the very harbour that is wanted for this town. It would contain a good number of men of war, safe from all winds, would afford them several careening places, would admit of their doubling the Vache Island to windward, and enable them to carry on with the town, along-side the coast, an intercourse, which, being protected by batteries properly disposed, would keep all the corsairs in awe. The only inconvenience is, that the ship-worm is more apt to get at the vessel there than in other parts, on account of the nature of the bottom, and the calmness of the sea.

There is a safer anchorage at the town of Coteaux; but it is only fit for small vessels. The foreign trade, which is allowed there in time of war, and can hardly be prevented in time of peace, has rendered this port of consequence, which, in other respects, is almost defenceless. Next to Cayes, this is the principal town upon the coast where most business is transacted. Its territory, and the adjacent country, abounds chiefly in indigo, but very little of this is conveyed to France.

The southern part terminates at cape Tiburon. The little settlement made there, instead of a harbour, has nothing but a road, where the sea is constantly rough; but its fortifications are a protection to such merchant ships as are able to double the cape. It affords a retreat to neutral ships, which, being pursued by the corsairs, have not been able to reach Jaquemel; and likewise to our men of war, in danger from the violence of the winds in these latitudes, or from the superior strength of an enemy's squadron.

Though this coast is the least of the three belonging to the French colony of St Domingo, and that, on the last day of December 1766, it contained but 33,663 slaves, yet it is so considerable, that the mother-country

country may expect, in time, as great a produce from thence, as from the richest of her windward islands. It is at present greatly exposed, from its vicinity to Jamaica; but, in time, it may be in a condition to threaten that bulwark of the English, when once the lands are improved, the country well peopled, the sea-ports fortified and defended, and when once it has acquired that degree of solidity to which a good administration ought to bring it.

In passing from the south to the west, the next settlement is at cape Donna Maria. It is as yet so weak, that, in twenty leagues of sea-coast, there are not above fifty Europeans able to bear arms. And, indeed, a declaration of war is to them a signal of retreat, although they ventured to remain in their habitations during the late hostilities. But every inhabitant took care to have a subterraneous retreat for himself and his slaves, whenever any corsair appeared. Notwithstanding this precaution, several of their works have been surpris'd and carried off.

The next district, known by the name of la Grande Anse, or l'Anse de Jeremie, is not so liable to these accidents. This town, situated on a rising ground, where the air is pure, has some tolerable houses, and is very promising. The great plenty of cotton and cocoa has induced some merchants to trade there; and it is to this place that corsairs, which cruize upon the coast of Jamaica, bring in their prizes. Culture and population have made some progress, and promise much more.

No such thing is to be expected at Petit Guaves. This place, so famous in the times of free-booters, is now a heap of ruins. Its former splendor was owing to a road, where ships of all burdens found excellent anchorage, conveniencies for refitting, and a shelter from all winds. As a harbour, it would still be famous and frequented, were it not for the vicinity of Gonave, and for the stagnating waters of the river Abaret, which is lost in the morasses, and makes the air foul and unwholesome.

Leogane, situated within five leagues of Petit Guaves, contains 317 houses; which form a long square, and

and fifteen streets, wide and well laid out. It stands half a league from the sea, in a narrow but fertile plain, well cultivated, and watered with a great many rivulets. The inhabitants are extremely desirous of having a canal opened from the town to the anchorage, which would save the inconvenience of land-carriage. If it were adviseable to have a fortified town on the western coast, undoubtedly Leogane would claim the preference. It stands upon plain ground, is not commanded by any eminence, and cannot be annoyed by ships. But to secure it from being surpris'd, it should be surrounded by a rampart of earth, with a deep ditch, which might be filled with water without the least expence. This would not cost near so much as what has been laid out at Port-au-Prince; and with what success the reader shall judge.

The western part of the island was the first that was cultivated by the French, it being at the greatest distance from the Spanish forces, which they had then reason to fear. This being in the center of the coasts in their possession, they fixed the seat of government there. It was first settled at Petit Guaves, but they were soon disgusted with the barrenness and unwholesomeness of this spot. It was then transferred to Leogone, and afterwards to Port-au-Prince, which, in 1750, became the residence of a superior council, a commander in chief, and an intendant. The place that was made choice of for the intended capital, is an opening, about 1400 toises long, in a direct line, and commanded on both sides. Two harbours, formed by some little islands, have afforded a pretence for this injudicious choice. The harbour intended for trading vessels being now almost choaked up, can no longer admit men of war with safety; and the great harbour designed for these being as unwholesome as the other, from the exhalations of the small islands, neither is, nor can be defended by any thing against a superior enemy.

A small squadron might even block up a stronger one, in so unfavourable a position. Gonave, which divides the bay in two, would leave a free and safe passage for the lesser squadron; the sea-winds would prevent

prevent the other squadron from getting up to it; the land-winds, by facilitating the exit of the enemy's ships from the harbour, would leave them the choice of retreating through either of the outlets of St Mark and Leogane; and they would always have the advantage of keeping Gonave between them and the French squadron.

But what would be the consequence if the French squadron should prove the weakest? Disabled and pursued, it could never gain a shelter that runs so deep into land as Port-au-Prince, before the conqueror had taken advantage of its defeat. If the disabled ships should reach the place, nothing could hinder the enemy from pursuing them almost in a line, and even from entering the king's harbour, where they would take refuge.

The best of all stations for a cruize, is that where you may chuse whether you will accept or decline the fight; where there is but a small space to guard, where the whole may be viewed from one central point, where safe anchorage may be found at the end of every tack, where one may be concealed without going far, get wood and water at pleasure, and sail in open seas, in which there is nothing to fear but from squalls. These are the advantages that an enemy's squadron will always have over the French ships at anchor in Port-au-Prince. A single frigate might safely come and bid defiance to them, and would be sufficient to intercept any trading ships that should attempt to go in or out without a convoy.

Nevertheless, a harbour so unfavourable as this hath determined the building of the town. It extends along the sea-shore the space of 1200 fathoms, that is, nearly along the opening which the sea has made in the center of the western coast. In this great extent, which runs into the land about 550 fathoms, are buried 558 houses, dispersed in 29 streets. The drainings of the torrents that fall from the hills make this place always damp, without supplying it with good water. The inhabitants are obliged to send a great way to get more wholesome water. Add to all this, the little security there is in a place commanded on

the

the land-side, and on the sea-side, and easy of access in all parts. Even the small islands which divide the harbours, so far from defending the town from an invasion, would only serve to cover the landing.

This description, which will not be contradicted by any unprejudiced man acquainted with the place, plainly shews, that the government has bestowed too much attention on Port-au-Prince. It would be a fatal error obstinately to fight against nature, by endeavouring to defend by art a place that lyes open to invasion on all sides. It would still be a greater error, to collect there the courts of justice, troops, warlike stores, provisions, the arsenal, in a word, all that constitutes the support of a great colony, and at the same time to leave it open to the enemy. This port ought merely to serve for the embarkation of the crops gathered in the adjacent fields, and in the rich plain of the Cul-de-sac. This would only require a guard sufficient to prevent a surprise, and to secure the retreat of the inhabitants, who will always be ready to abandon a place, which must inevitably surrender on the first attack.

St Mark is much in the same situation. This town is not very deep, but extends along the shore, at the bottom of a bay crowned with a crescent of hills, which are only parted from the sea by a very small plain. Nature has left this interval of life and cultivation between the aridity of the mountains and the abyss of the waters. These hills, however, though barren, are not altogether useless: they have the property, which is found in no other part of the colony, of furnishing as good free-stone as any in Europe, and the coast itself supplies it without much labour. With this stone the town is built, which consists of 154 houses, formerly defended by an intrenchment of earth, which no longer exists.

St Mark is a very trading place. All such commodities as are not sent to Port-au-Prince are brought thither, as likewise are all the crops gathered from the walls within the town to the mole of St Nicholas. The prosperity of this place would be greatly increased, if the plain of Artibonite could be watered, which is naturally too dry, but would surpass the best lands in fruitfulness, if this could be once effected.

The

The Artibonite takes its name from a river which divides it lengthways, almost from one end to the other. The waters of this river, sometimes confined by sluices, flow constantly on the highest part of the plain. The height of the bed of the river has long ago suggested the idea of dividing it, and it has been geometrically demonstrated that this is practicable; so much have enlightened nations the dominion over nature. But a project founded on mathematical knowledge ought not to be carried into execution without the utmost caution. The impetuosity of the stream, when swelled by rains, and the softness of the soil on which the river flows, make it very dangerous to make any alteration in the banks. The smallest outlet, injudiciously made, would in a few moments open such an enormous breach, as would make way for very alarming and destructive inundations over a vast tract of land.

Nevertheless, all the proprietors are impatient to see this great work undertaken. But administration must judge whether private societies, which solicit leave to procure conveniences of water that can only serve to enrich their own grounds, would not be detrimental to the project of watering the whole country. Rather than suffer public welfare to give place to the interest of a few, the government should assist those who cannot afford to contribute towards the general conveyance of water. They would soon be repaid by an increase of one-sixth in the produce of the colony. This increase would be greater still, if a method could be devised to drain that part of the coast which is drowned in the waters of the Artibonite. By such means the man who enjoys the blessings of society, makes the earth subservient to his own use, by altering the course of the rivers. The fertility he imparts to the land can alone justify his conquests, if indeed art and labour, law and virtues, may be allowed in process of time to atone for the injustice of an invasion.

The western part of the colony, which, on the last day of December 1766, contained alone 83,080 slaves, is separated from the northern part by the mole of St Nicholas, which lyes on both coasts. At the extremity of the cape is a good, safe, and commodious harbour.

It

It stands directly opposite to point Maizi, in the island of Cuba, and seems naturally destined by this position to become the most important port in all America for the convenience of navigation. The opening of the bay is 1450 fathoms broad. The road leads to the harbour, and the harbour to the basin. All this great recess is wholesome, though the sea is quite still there. The basin, which seems as if made for the purposes of careening, has not the inconvenience of close harbours. It is open to the west and north winds, and yet, if they blow ever so hard, they can never interrupt or retard the work in the harbour. The peninsula where the harbour is situated rises gradually to the plains, which stand upon a very large basis; it seems as it were a single mountain, with a broad and flat top descending with a gentle slope to unite with the rest of the island.

The mole of St Nicholas was long over-looked by the inhabitants of St Domingo. The bare hills and rocks it abounded with afforded nothing worth their notice. The use which the English made of it during the last war has made it of some consequence. The French ministry, instructed by our very enemies, sent a number of Acadians and Germans there, who died very fast. This is constantly the fate that attends all new settlements between the tropics. The few that have out-lived the fatal effects of the climate, of vexation and poverty, are daily deserting the poor and barren soil of St Nicholas. Possibly the freedom granted to foreigners to frequent this place may put a stop to the emigration. Perhaps the facility with which the colonists may be able to dispose of their crops and their cattle, in consequence of this communication, may fix them upon the lands allotted to them. They produce, however, no commodities fit for Europe except cottons.

The next settlement to the Mole of St Nicholas, on the north-coast, is called Port Paix. It owed its origin to the neighbourhood of Tortuga, whose inhabitants took refuge there when they forsook that island. The grounds were cleared so early, that this is one of the healthiest spots in St Domingo, and has long since attained the utmost degree of richness and population it

is capable of; but is not very considerable, though industry has been carried so far, as even to bore mountains for the conveyance of water to moisten the grounds. They have very little sugar, and chiefly apply themselves to the culture of indigo, coffee, and cotton. It is on all sides so difficult to come at the Port Paix, that it is in a manner cut off from the rest of the island.

The next settlement to this retired place is Cape Francois. This town stands on the side of an extensive plain, twenty leagues long and four broad. Few lands are better watered; but there is not one river where a sloop can go up above three miles. All this great space is intersected with strait roads, forty feet wide, and planted on both sides with hedges of citron-trees, thick enough to serve as a fence against animals. There are long avenues of tall trees, leading up to several habitations. It were to be wished such as these had been planted along the roads; for they would not only have been ornamental, but would also have afforded a delightful shade for travellers, and prevented that scarcity of wood which is already complained of. Though the French had long been sensible of the value of this soil, which is rich and fruitful beyond description, they did not set about cultivating it till the year 1670, when they had nothing more to fear from the inroads of the Spaniards, who till then had continued in that neighbourhood in a state of hostility. The method that was taken of bringing thither the inhabitants of Santa Cruz and St Christopher's, hastened the progress of this settlement. It is now, of all places in the world, that which produces the greatest quantity of sugar.

The plain, which is bounded to the north by the sea, is terminated to the south by a ridge of mountains, which varies in depth from four to eight leagues. Few of them are very high; there is nothing to obstruct the inhabitants; several of them may be cultivated to the very summit, and they are all intersected at intervals with exceeding fine plantations of coffee and indigo. In these delightful vales all the sweets of spring are enjoyed, without either winter or summer. There are but two seasons in the year, and they are equally fine. The ground, always laden with fruits and covered with

flowers

flowers, realizes the delights and riches of poetical descriptions. Wherever we turn our eyes we are enchanted with a variety of objects, coloured and reflected by the purest light. The air is temperate in the day time, and the nights are constantly cool. The inhabitants of the plain, upon which the sun darts his most powerful rays, repair to these mountains to breathe a cooler air, and allay their thirst with wholesome water. Happy the mortal who first taught the French to settle on this delicious spot.

This man was one of those whom the spirit of intolerance in religious matters began to drive out from their native country. A Calvinist, named Gobin, went and reared the first habitation at this Cape. More houses were built as the grounds were cleared. This settlement had already made such progress in the compass of five and twenty years, as to excite the jealousy of the English. They joined their forces with those of Spain, and, attacking it both by land and sea, in 1695, they took, plundered, and reduced it to ashes.

A great advantage might have been made of this misfortune. Interest, which is the primary founder of all colonies, had induced the inhabitants to chuse, in a harbour that is three leagues in circumference, the foot of the hill for the position of a town, because it was the place that lay most convenient for the anchorage. This situation, however, being unwholesome, should have induced the colonists to settle some where else. They never attended to this circumstance, but rebuilt their town where it never ought to have been built at all, in a close place, in which the rays of the sun are rendered more scorching by the reflection of the mountains, and the wind can only come from the coast over the marshes. Yet such is the richness of the adjacent country, that the town has always prospered, and increased in buildings more and more pleasant and beautiful.

The Cape is now intersected by twenty-nine strait streets, into 226 clusters of houses, which amount to 810; but these streets are too narrow, and having no slope, are always dirty; for, as they are paved only in the middle, the kennels, which are not even on each

fide, gather into puddles and common shores, instead of draining off the waters.

Several squares have been planned in this city. That of Notre Dame, though an old one, is hardly levelled. It is a long square, with a fountain in the middle, which is often dry, for want of being properly supplied with water. A church has been begun some years since, but its immense size, the want of money, and the tedious importation of stone from Europe, makes the work go on very slowly. The square of Clugny, which is a regular one, was built from necessity, to remove an offensive morass; and the drying up of this bog must certainly contribute to the wholesomeness of the air. The governor's house, the barracks, and a royal magazine, are the only public buildings that attract the notice of the curious; but the humane observer cannot avoid beholding with pleasure those foundations that are called the houses of Providence. Most of the French, when they first come into the colony, are destitute of resources and talents, and, before they have acquired industry to get their living, are almost all carried off by sickness. At the Cape, these distressed creatures, without money and without friends, are taken into two habitations, where the men and women are severally provided with every thing they want, till they can get employed. It is a shame that such an excellent institution has not been copied in other places; a neglect equally repugnant to humanity and good policy.

It would be for the interest of trade to erect in all colonies such hospitable houses as those of St Domingo. These may be said to be truly pious and divine institutions, as they are calculated for the preservation of mankind. Whether it is owing to this, or to good management in other respects, certain it is, that fewer in proportion die at the Cape than in the other towns along the sea-coast. The care that has been taken to purify the air, by draining the fens, the thorough clearing of the hills, the proximity of a plain almost completely cultivated, all these circumstances have concurred to correct the noxious influence of an unhealthy situation.

The harbour of the Cape deserves to receive the rich

rich produce of all the adjacent country; and it is admirably well adapted to admit the ships that come from Europe. The air is the best in the island. It is exposed to no wind but the north-east, and cannot even be hurt by this, the entrance being full of reefs, which break the violence of the waves. A ship gets out very easily, and soon launches into the open sea.

Fourteen leagues to windward of the Cape is Fort Dauphin. It was formerly a town, which was called Bayaha; but it has since been removed nearer to the sea, and has changed its name with its place. The new town lies in the inmost center of a spacious harbour, which has only one outlet, formed by a channel, 1500 fathoms long, and about 100 broad. It is surrounded by a river to the west, and terminated by the sea-shore on the east. The fort stands on a very small peninsula to the north, and on the southern side is the plain. The town contains as yet but seventy houses. It is at a sufficient distance from the mountains, to be out of the reach of any hill that might reflect the heat; but some fens in the neighbourhood make the air unwholesome. The fortifications are sufficient to keep a squadron at bay for two or three days.

Though this be such a fine and safe harbour, the major part of the produce of its own plain is still sent to the Cape. The mass of trade will always attract the lesser branches, and great sea-ports will absorb and dry up small ones.

In 1720, the commodities of the whole colony of St Domingo amounted only to 1,200,000 pounds weight of indigo, 1,400,000 of white sugar, and 21,000,000 of raw sugar. The plantations were extended, and, in 1734, those of cotton and coffee were added. In 1754, the commodities were sold upon the spot, for 28,833,581 livres *. It is true, they received from the mother-country to the amount of 40,628,780 livres † worth of goods. But if the colony got into debt, it was only to hasten its prosperity. The population

Produce and population of the colony.

* 1,261,469l. 3s. 4½d.

† 1,777,509l. 2s. 6d.

lation of whites amounted then to 7758 men capable of bearing arms; to 2525 women, either widows or married; to 781 young marriageable persons; to 1691 boys, and 1503 girls under twelve years of age. Among the blacks or free mulattoes, were reckoned 1362 men fit to bear arms; 1626 widows or married women; 1009 boys, and 864 girls under twelve years of age. The manufactures were peopled with 79,785 negroes; 53,817 negro women; 20,518 negro boys, and 18,428 negro girls. Of raw sugar they worked 344 plantations, and 255 white sugar; 3379 of indigo; and there were cultivated 98,946 cocoa trees; 6,300,367 cotton plants; and 21,053,842 cassia trees. The provisions of the colony were 5,520,503 banana trees; 1,201,849 plots of potatoes; 226,098 plots of yams; and 2,830,586 trenches of cassava. The cattle did not exceed 63,454 horses and mules, and 92,946 heads of horned cattle.

In 1764, St Domingo had 8786 white men able to bear arms, of which 4306 lived in the north, 3470 in the west, and only 1010 in the south. These forces were increased by 4114 mulattoes or free negroes, who were enrolled. Of these there were 497 to the south, 2250 to the west, and 1370 to the north.

The number of slaves were 206,000 of all ages and of both sexes, parcelled out as follows: 12,000 in nine cities, some artificers, and some employed in domestic services; 4000 employed in the lesser towns, in the tile and brick kilns, pot-houses, lime kilns, and other necessary handicrafts; 1000 destined to the cultivation of provisions and kitchen grounds; and 180,000 to productions for exportation. Since this estimate was made, about fifteen thousand negroes have been brought annually into the colony. These have not supplied the place of the dead, for that vacancy was more than filled up by slaves smuggled into the island; nor have they been employed as servants in the cities, where a lesser number is kept than formerly. These fresh negroes were all able-bodied men, and have been put to the labours of the plantations, which they must have greatly improved. Neither have the plantations received any injury by the substituting of some articles in lieu of others.

Instead

Instead of indigo, which began to yield but poorly on some grounds that were too much spent, forty new sugar plantations have been formed. There are now 260 to the north, 197 to the west, and 84 to the south. The refining works have been increased in still greater proportion than the plantations, and the quantity of white sugar is almost doubled. Cotton has made great progress in the valleys to the west, and coffee has thriven prodigiously in those to the north. Some plantations of cocoa have even sprung up in the woods of the great bay. Peace has restored the old branches of trade, and opened new ones. Under her protection every thing prospers, and she constitutes the felicity of both worlds.

We may affirm, from undoubted authority, that, in the course of the year 1767, there have been exported from this colony no less than 72,718,781 pounds weight of raw sugar; 51,562,013 pounds of white sugar; 1,769,562 pounds of indigo; 150,000 pounds of cocoa; 12,197 977 pounds of coffee; 2,965,920 pounds of cotton; 8,470 of hides in the hair; 10,350 tanned hides; 4,108 casks of rum; 21,104 casks of molasses.

This is the sum total of the productions entered at the custom houses of St Domingo, in 1767, and exported on board 347 ships sent from France. The goods taken in under sail, the overplus of the weight, the payment of the smuggled blacks, cannot have carried away less than a fourth part of the produce of the colony, which must be added to the known estimate of her wealth. Since that period, all the plantations are increased, and those of coffee trebled.

Opinions differ as to the increase it is still capable of attaining. Some think it may be doubled, others rate it only at one third. All agree that culture will still admit of great improvements, which may be expected from the activity of the nation that is possessed of so improveable a soil. But can the nation hope to reap the fruits of her labours? Is it certain that she will always preserve the property of them? These two questions deserve a serious discussion.

THE

Trade of the French of St Domingo with the Spaniards settled in the same island.

THE trade which the French of St Domingo carry on with their indolent neighbours is of more consequence than it is generally thought to be. They supply them with stockings, hats, linens, guns, hard-ware, and some wearing apparel; and receive in payment, horses, horned cattle both for slaughter and for labour, smoaked beef and bacon, skins, and lastly, 12 or 1,500,000 livres*, which the court of Madrid devotes annually to the maintenance of the governor, the clergy, and the troops in the first settlement the Spaniards ever made in the new world. Excepting some few Portugal pieces which retain a nominal value, far above their intrinsic worth, they have no coin but what they draw from their neighbours the Spaniards. Revolutions only, which it is impossible to foresee, can ever put a stop to this intercourse between the two nations that divide St Domingo, and which is carried on both by land and sea. Here mutual wants get the better of inbred antipathy, or else the uniformity of climate stifles these seeds of division.

In what manner the colony can insure the continuance of its connections with Europe.

IT were to be wished that the French colonists were as certain of always keeping up their connection with Europe. Had the first adventurers of that nation who went over to St Domingo been in a condition to think of plantations, they would doubtless have seized upon that part of the island which lies most to windward, which they might easily have done. The plains on that side are large and fertile; the land lies quite open to the ocean; the coasts are safe; the harbours may be entered as soon as discovered, and people lose sight of them the very day they sail out. The track is such that no enemy can form any ambuscade; the coast is unfit for cruising; these latitudes are convenient for the Europeans, and the passage expeditious. But, as the scheme of the first French navigators was to attack the Spanish ships, and to infest the gulph of Mexico, the possessions they occupied in St Domingo were sur-

* About 59,000 l. on an average.

rounded

rounded by Cuba, Jamaica, the Turks, Tortuga, the Caicos, Goyava, and Lucayos islands; where the roads lye concealed, and are the lurking places of the corsairs. They are also surrounded by a multitude of sand-banks and rocks, which make the progress of a ship slow and uncertain; and by narrow seas, which must give a great advantage to the enemy, either for landing, for blocking up, or for cruising.

No effectual remedy will ever be found out against so many dangers, but a squadron constantly kept there in time of war, and always in motion. Whether it has been owing to inability in the government to afford this kind of protection to the colony, or to the negligence of the admirals, who have lain by inactive in the harbour with their armed vessels, certain it is, that hitherto the only plan of defence which could secure the trade of St Domingo has never been pursued.

If the ministry and the navy should alter their principles and their conduct, the first thing to be done will be to protect the latitudes about the Cape, where the navigators coming from France always enter in time of war, and mostly too in the time of peace. The want of reconnoitring the promontory of la Grange, situated ten leagues higher up, brings thither swarms of privateers, who seldom miss their prey. Two good armed vessels stationed there would easily make themselves masters of that cruize. If, contrary to all expectation, the enemy should come with a superior force, no doubt they must yield; but it would probably be but for a short time.

Having thus facilitated the entrance of ships to the Cape, the next thing would be to secure their going out, which might be effected in the following manner: One of the two men of war, which should always be stationed in the harbour, would take several merchantmen under her convoy, see them safe out, and return within three or four days at furthest. She would seldom be in any danger, because ships of the line are hardly ever seen in those parts, nor could they be there without being observed.

Whilst one part of the squadron was employed in protecting the navigation of the north, the rest, which should

should be the most considerable part, would cover the other coasts of the colony. This part would have its chief station at Port-au Prince. Two of these vessels would go from thence to the Mole of St Nicholas, as dangerous a place for ships going from the Cape to the west and south, as la Grange for those that want to land at the Cape. They should never pass the point of the Mole; the forces stationed to the northward should endeavour to scour the sea as far as that place, which is of the more consequence, as all the armaments from New England going to Jamaica must be intercepted at this passage they are obliged to make. The squadron of Port-au-Prince should further be commissioned to shew itself now and then to the southward of the island, to protect its own latitudes, and to convey all homeward-bound ships till they got clear of the island. It might even occasionally cruize off Jamaica when it could be spared.

Having thus provided for the security of the produce of the colony from the attempts of the enemy, it is incumbent on the mother-country to take the necessary measures for preserving so valuable a property.

To put an end to the disputes subsisting between the French and Spaniards at St Domingo, it would be necessary to fix the limits of both colonies.

In former times, the Spaniards, who still occupy half the island, were formidable rivals. As soon as the French had made their appearance at St Domingo, warm contests arose between the two nations. A few private and insignificant men ventured to go to war with a people armed under a regular authority. These men were acknowledged by their country as soon as they were thought strong enough to maintain themselves in their usurpations. A commander was sent to them, who bore the name of governor of Tortuga and St Domingo, which title has since been changed to that of governor-general of the Leeward islands. The brave man who was first appointed to command those intrepid adventurers, caught their spirit to such a degree as to propose to his court the conquest of the whole island. He pledged his life

for

for the success of the undertaking, provided they would send him a Squadron strong enough to block up the harbour of the capital.

The ministry of Versailles, neglecting a project which was in reality more practicable than it appeared to them, lest the French exposed to continual hostilities. Notwithstanding this, they always repulsed them successfully, and even carried devastation into the enemy's country; but those animosities kept up in their minds a spirit of robbery and plunder, gave them an aversion from useful labours, and stopt the progress of agriculture, which should be the ultimate end of every well-regulated colony, and the first object of every society that is in the possession of lands. The error which France had fallen into, in not seconding the ardour of the new colonists for the conquest of the whole island, was likely to have lost her that part of which she was already in possession. Whilst the French were engaged in carrying on the war of 1688 against all Europe, the Spaniards and the English, who both dreaded seeing them firmly established at St Domingo, united their forces to drive them out. Their first attempts gave them reason to expect a compleat success, when they quarreled with each other, and from that time became irreconcilable enemies. Ducaffe, who managed the colony with much sagacity and great reputation, took advantage of their divisions to attack them one after the other. He first fell upon Jamaica, where he destroyed all with fire and sword. From thence he was preparing to turn his arms against St Domingo, and would infallibly have reduced the whole island, had he not been stopped in this expedition by orders from his court.

The house of Bourbon ascended the throne of Spain, and the French lost all hopes of conquering St Domingo. Hostilities, which had not even been suspended there, by the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle, Nimeguen, and Ryswick, ceased at last between people who could never be true friends to each other. The French planters recovered their tranquillity. For some time past, their slaves, taking advantage of the national divisions, had shaken off their chains, and removed into a district where

where they found freedom and no labour. This desertion, which must naturally have increased, was abated by the Spaniards entering into a contract to bring home the fugitives to their neighbours, for the sum of 250 livres * a-head. Although this agreement was not very religiously observed, it proved a powerful check till the disturbances that broke out between the two nations in 1718. At this period the negroes deserted their works in multitudes. This loss induced the French to think of reviving their old project of expelling totally from the island such neighbours, who were equally dangerous by their indolence, and by their turbulent spirit. The war did not last long enough to bring about this revolution. At the conclusion of the peace, Philip V. gave orders for the restitution of all the fugitives that could be found. They were just embarked, to be sent to their old masters, when the people rose and set them at liberty: an act which we could hardly disapprove, had they been prompted to it by humanity, rather than by national hatred. It will always be pleasing to see people excited to rebellion on account of the slavery of the miserable negroes. Those who were rescued on this occasion fled into inaccessible mountains, where they have since multiplied to such a degree, as to be able to afford a safe retreat to all the slaves that can find means to join them. There, in consequence of the cruelty of civilized nations, they become as free and as fierce as so many tygers, in expectation, perhaps, of a chief and a conqueror, who may restore the violated rights of mankind, by seizing upon an island which seems to have been intended for the slaves who till the ground, and not for the tyrants who water it with the blood of those victims.

The present system of politics will not allow France and Spain to be at war with each other. Should any event occasion a rupture between the two nations, notwithstanding the compact between the two crowns, it would probably be but a transient quarrel, that would not allow time for projecting conquests which must soon be restored. The enterprizes on both sides would,

therefore,

therefore, be confined to ravaging the country; and, in this case, the nation that does not cultivate, at least at St Domingo, would prove formidable, by its very poverty, to that which has already made some progress in the culture of its lands. A Castilian governor was so sensible of the advantage that the indolence and poverty of his people gave him, that he once wrote to the French commandant, that if he forced him to an invasion, he would destroy more in the compass of one league, than they could, if they were to lay waste all the country he commanded.

Hence it is demonstrable, that, if a war should break out in Europe between the two powers, the most active of those powers ought to ask for a neutrality in favour of this island. Perhaps, it would be for the interest of both, that it should be totally in the hands of the most laborious. But, even tho' the court of Madrid should resolve to relinquish a territory which is rather a burden to Spain, there are still many difficulties remaining. Great Britain, who is now mistress of the fate of America, would hardly consent to such an accession of wealth to her rival.

A more natural scheme, and which ought to meet, with no opposition, would be to fix the boundaries of the two nations that share St Domingo. This arrangement ought to have taken place on the accession of Philip V. to the throne; an event which gave to the French possessions a degree of stability and legality they never had before. It might have been expected, that the nation which gave the other a king, should have stipulated, that all the territory lying between the coasts they inhabited to the north and south should remain under their dominion. More powerful interests then claimed the attention of both parties; and this discussion was put off to another time, which is never come. Not a single conference has ever been opened to settle this difficulty. This neglect has been the occasion of much bloodshed amongst the inhabitants. The seeds of rage and discord were sown in every breast; and at last, in 1730, both nations took up arms to destroy each other. The principal people of both colonies succeeded at that time in calming their fury, by a provi-

sional convention ; but the successors of those able and moderate men may not always have the same authority or the same good fortune. The most effectual method would be to put an end for ever to this intestine war, by legally authenticating the respective property of both parties.

To proceed with order and justice, it would be proper to go as far back as the year 1700. At that period, both nations, being upon friendly terms, remained the just owners of the lands they then possessed. The encroachments made during the course of this century, by the subjects of one of the crowns, are the encroachments of individuals upon each other ; they are not become lawful possessions by being tolerated ; and the rights of both powers are still the same, since they have not been abrogated, directly or indirectly, by any convention.

Now it is evident, from incontestable facts, that, in the beginning of this century, the French possessions, which are now bounded on the northern coast by the river of Massacre, extended then to the river Yague. Those of the southern coast, which had been pushed on as far as the point of Cape Beata, have been contracted in process of time to the inlet of Pitre. This revolution has been insensibly brought about, and is the natural consequence of the æconomical system of the two neighbouring nations. The one, which has applied itself chiefly to agriculture, has collected all its possessions towards the most frequented ports, where the produce might be most readily disposed of. The other, whose subjects were shepherds rather than planters, wanting more room for the breeding of cattle, have seized upon all the forsaken lands. By the nature of things, the pastures have been enlarged, and the fields contracted, or at least brought closer together. It is not equitable that the most industrious nation, that which does most good to the ground by improving it, should be stripped by the other, which only wanders about, and consumes without propagating.

It would not be so easy to fix the boundaries of the French in the inland parts, the frequent and daily revolutions that have happened there having occasioned

much

much uncertainty and confusion. The two colonies are at present separated by the mountains of Ounaminthe, of the Trou, of the Great River, of the Artibonite, and of the Mirehalai. By this barrier, the French are confined every where, excepting the points of Mole St Nicholas and Cape Tiburon, to a narrow slip, which extends no where more than nine leagues and a half, and in some places not above six leagues. This territory forms a kind of crescent, whose convexity takes in 250 leagues of sea-coast, to the north, west, and south. But these limits cannot subsist, for a reason which must get the better of all other considerations.

The French settlements to the north are divided from those to the west and south by inaccessible mountains. The impossibility of succouring them, exposes them to the invasions of a power which is equally an enemy to both nations. The common danger, which creates a kind of reciprocal interest, should engage the court of Madrid to settle the limits in such a manner, that her ally may find the assistance she may want for her defence. The land that should be given up is mountainous, a very indifferent soil, and at a great distance from the sea. The proprietors of these lands, which are, indeed, uncultivated, but covered with flocks, should be indemnified by France, with a generosity which should leave them no room to regret what they had lost.

WHEN the possessions of the colony are thus connected and supported within, by an uninterrupted chain of communication, they must be fortified against the attacks of the only enemy that is truly formidable, the English. If they mean to attack St Domingo by the west or south, they will collect their forces at Jamaica; if by the north, they will make their preparations at Barbadoes, or some other of the Windward islands, from whence they may reach the Cape in seven or eight days; whereas it would take five or six weeks to come to that port from Jamaica.

The west and south are incapable of being defended.

Measures which ought to be taken by France to protect this colony from foreign invasions.

The immense extent of the tract renders it impossible to maintain any connection or regularity in the motions of the troops. If they are dispersed, they become useless by being divided; if they are collected, for the defence of such posts as are most liable to be attacked, from the natural weakness of their position, they would be in danger of being all lost at once. Large battalions would be but a burden upon such extensive coasts, which present too much flank or too much front to the enemy. We must be content with erecting or keeping up batteries to protect the roads, the merchant ships, and the coasting trade, to keep off privateers, and even to prevent the landing of a man of war or two, that might come to ravage the coast and levy contributions. The light troops, which are sufficient to support these batteries, will give ground in proportion to the advances of the enemy, and only take care to avoid surrendering till they are in danger.

But it is not necessary that we should give up every kind of defence. At the back of each coast, there should be a place for shelter and for reinforcement, always open for retreat, out of the enemy's reach, safe from insults, and able to repulse an attack. This should be a narrow pass, where we might intrench and defend ourselves to advantage. Such is that of la Gascogne on the western coast. It has every natural advantage of situation, with this only inconvenience, that it is not placed in the middle between all the quarters. The general rendezvous for the south, established on the plantation called Perrein, at the distance of 10,000 fathoms from the Cayes, is a retreat capable of very great resistance. In the center of all motions of retreat, it comprehends all that can be wished for as a defence. Nature has provided it with a narrow pass, and, at the same time, covered its flanks, and left an opening at the back, which, whilst it shuts every avenue against an enemy, secures a communication with the interior parts of the colony.

From these impregnable retreats they may continually harass the conqueror, who, having no strong hold, will be perpetually exposed to surprize. These alarms would be doubled, if our people were provided with a few

few squadrons of light horse, which might be procured at a small expence. The Spaniards of St Domingo sell Andalusian horses at a moderate price, which are very tractable, and yet full of spirit, are unshod, and feed all the year round in the meadows, where they sleep in the open air. These are excellent for skirmishes, and they will afford time to wait for succours, which may be brought up at any time from the north. The troops employed in this service, may, should there be occasion for it, fly to the assistance of those other parts of the colony which can only be attacked by sea.

All those who are acquainted with the island of St Domingo know that the French settlements make as it were two distinct colonies, one to the south and west, and the other to the north, which have no real and beneficial communication with the continent. So that even supposing the English were so strong, or had actually got a firm footing in the west and south, they never could penetrate to the north by land. Should they attempt it, it must be by that narrow slip which joins the French possessions on the west and north, at Cape St Nicholas, or else by crossing the Spanish territories, both which are impracticable.

The first is a barren desert, so full of forests, passes, and precipices, that a man on foot cannot get through but with much time and extreme labour. The other way is not much better. It lies across the Spanish mountains, which are high, barren, and craggy, and whoever should attempt to pass them must expect to be harassed. The northern coast, therefore, being inaccessible by land, can only be attacked by sea. As it is richer, more populous, and less extensive than the other two, it is more adapted to support a land war, and to make a regular defence.

The sea side, which is more or less rocky, is in many places swampy ground, and the mangroves, which cover these marshes, make them quite impenetrable. This natural defence is not so common as it was, since many of these copices have been cut away. But the landing places, which are commonly no better than gaps, surrounded on both sides by these woods over-

flowed with water, require but a moderate front to stop them up. Magazines, and other stone buildings, are common there; they furnish post for the erection of battlements, and secure the placing of some masked batteries.

This first line of the shore seems to promise, that a coast of eighteen leagues, so well defended by nature, would, when seconded by the valour of the French, put the enemy in danger of being beaten the moment they should land. If their schemes were discovered, or if the dispositions they were making at sea should point out from afar the place of their landing, the forces might repair thither and prevent it. But experience shews the infallible advantage of squadrons at anchor.

It is not only the firing of broadsides from the ships to cover the approach of the boats that facilitates landing, it is the impossibility there is of guarding every part of the coast. A squadron at anchor threatens too many places at once. Land forces move very slowly about the windings of the coast, while the boats and sloops arrive speedily by a shorter way. The assailer follows the firing, while the defender must go all along the bow. Disappointed and wearied out with a variety of motions, the latter is not less apprehensive of those he sees by broad day light, than of the manœuvres of the night, which he cannot see.

In order to be able to oppose a descent, the first thing to be done is to suppose it actually accomplished; all our courage and strength is then exerted in taking advantage of the delays or mistakes of the enemy. As soon as they are observed at sea, they may be immediately expected on land, as if they dropt from the clouds. A large shore, on which a landing may be effected, will always leave the plain of the Cape open to invasion; so that the chief attention must be directed, not to the sea shore, but to the inland parts.

The inland parts are in general covered with sugar-canes, which being more or less high, according to their degree of maturity, successively make the fields appear so many thickets. These are occasionally set on fire, to cover a march, to retard the enemy's pursuit, or to deceive

deceive and astonish them. In two hours, instead of fields covered with crops, nothing is to be seen but an immense waste, covered with stubble.

The partitions of the cane grounds, the savannahs, and the fields where the provision grows, no more obstruct the motions of any army than our meadows. Instead of our villages, they have their habitations, which are not so populous, but stand thicker. The thick and strait hedges of citron trees, are closer and more impenetrable than the fences that inclose our fields. This is what constitutes the greatest difference in the view of the fields of America and those of Europe.

Throughout the plain of the Cape there are but few rivers, some few brooks, and little hillocks. In general the country is flat; there are some dikes against inundations, few ditches, if any; a wood or two, but not very thick; a few fens, a ground that is overflowed in a storm, and grows dusty again with twelve hours sunshine, rivers that fill one day and dry the next: such is the general face of the country. This diversity must afford advantageous encampments, and it must ever be remembered, that, in a defensive war, the post one removes to cannot be too near the one that is quit-
ted.

It is not the province of a writer to prescribe rules to military men. Cæsar himself told us what he had done, not what we are to do. Topographical descriptions, determining the goodness of such or such a post, the combination of marches, the art of encampments and retreats, the most learned theory; all these must be submitted to the eye of the general, who, with the principles in his head, and the materials in his hand, applies both to the circumstances of time and place, as they chance to occur. The military genius, though mathematical, is dependent on fortune, which suits the order of the operations to the diversity of appearances. Rules are liable to numberless exceptions. The very execution almost always alters the plan, and discomposes the system of an action. The courage or shyness of the troops, the rashness of the enemy, the good or bad success of his measures, an accidental combat, an
unforeseen

unforeseen event, a storm that swells a torrent, a high wind that conceals a snare or an ambuscade under clouds of dust, thunder that frightens the horses, or is confounded with the report of the cannon, the temperance of the air, which constantly influences the spirits of the commander and the blood of the soldiery: All these are so many physical or moral causes, which, by their uncertainty, may overturn the best concerted schemes.

Whatever place is made choice of for a descent on the north side of St Domingo, the town of the Cape will always be the object. The landing will undoubtedly be somewhere in the bay of the Cape, where the ships will be ready to augment the land-forces with two thirds of their crews, and to furnish them with provisions, artillery, ammunition, and whatever they may want for the siege of that opulent fortress. It is towards this bulwark of the colony that all endeavours to keep off the assailer must be directed. The choice of advantageous positions will, in some measure, make up for the inequality of numbers. At the moment of landing, the ground must be disputed, by supporting a kind of false attack, without engaging the whole of the troops. The troops must be posted in such a manner as to secure two retreats, the one towards the Cape, to form the garrison of that place, the other in the narrow passes of the mountains, where they will keep an intrenched camp, from whence they may annoy the besiegers, and retard the taking of the place. Should the place surrender, as it would be an easy matter to favour the evasion of the troops when they evacuate the place, all the business would not yet be over. The mountains in which they would take refuge, inaccessible to an army, surround the plain with a double or treble chain, and guard the inhabited parts, by very narrow passes, which may be easily defended. The principal of these is the defile of the Great River, where the enemy would find two or three passes of the river, that reach from one mountain to the other. In this place four or five hundred men would stop the most numerous army, by only sinking the bed of the waters. This resistance might be seconded by 25,000 inhabitants,

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both white and black, who are settled in these valleys. As the white men are more numerous here than upon the richer lands, and their crops are smaller, they cannot afford to consume any great quantity of the produce of Europe, so that what they cultivate is chiefly for their own subsistence; from this they might easily supply the troops that should defend their country. Any deficiency in the article of fresh meat, could be made up by the Spaniards, who breed vast quantities of cattle on the backs of these mountains.

After all, it may happen that the firmness of the troops may be worn out by the want of provisions or warlike stores, and they may be either forced or turned back. This suggested the idea, some years ago, at Versailles, of building a fortified town in the center of the mountains. Maréchal Noailles was a warm advocate for this scheme. It was then imagined, that by means of some redoubts of earth scattered along the coast, the enemy might be enticed by regular attacks, and insensibly exhausted by the loss of a great many men, in a climate where sickness destroys more than the sword. It was suggested that no more strong holds should be erected on the frontiers, where they lie exposed to the invasion of the masters of the sea, because, while they are incapable of defending their own habitations, they become so many bulwarks for the conquerors, who can easily take and guard them with their ships, and make a deposit, or draw from thence arms and men to keep the vanquished in awe. An entirely open country was better, in their opinion, for a power that has no maritime strength, than forces dispersed and forsaken upon shores wasted and depopulated by the intemperature of the climate.

It was in the center of the island that the hopes of establishing a solid defence were conceived. A road of twenty or thirty leagues, full of obstacles; where every march would cost several fights, in which the advantage of the post would render a detachment formidable to a whole army; where the removing of the artillery would be tedious and laborious; where the difficulty of convoys, and the distance of communication with the ocean; where every thing, in short, would

conspire

conspire to destroy the enemy : Such was to be as it were the glacis of the intended fortification. This capital was to stand upon high ground, where the air is more pure and temperate than in the plains below ; in the midst of a country which would supply the town with necessaries, particularly rice ; surrounded with flocks and herds, which, feeding upon a soil most favourable to their increase, would be reserved for times of need ; and provided with store-houses proportioned to its size and garrison. Such a city would have changed the colony into a kingdom, able to support itself for a long time ; whereas its present opulence only serves to weaken it, and, having superfluities without necessaries, it enriches a few proprietors, without affording them sustenance.

If the enemy had made themselves masters of the sea-coast, which nobody would have disputed with them, and were desirous of collecting the produce, they would stand in need of whole armies to keep merely upon the defensive ; for the continual excursions from the center would not permit them to do any more. The troops in the inland parts of the island, always sure of an honourable retreat, might easily be relieved by recruits from Europe, which would find no difficulty in penetrating to the center of a circle of so immense a circumference ; whereas all the English fleets would not be sufficient to fill up the vacancies which the climate would be continually making in their garrisons.

Notwithstanding these apparent advantages, the project of a fortification in the mountains has been dropt, and a system pursued which would confine the whole defence of the island to the Mole of St Nicholas. This new plan could not fail of being applauded by the planters, who do not like to see ramparts near their plantations, as they do them more mischief than they can do them good. They are sensible, that the whole force being directed to one point, they should have none but light troops left in their neighbourhood on the three coasts, which are sufficient to drive away the corsairs with their batteries, and are, besides, very convenient defenders, ever ready to yield without resistance,

ance, and to disperse or capitulate on the least intimation of an invasion.

This plan, so favourable to private interest, has also met with the approbation of some persons well versed in military affairs. They were of opinion, that the few troops which the colony will admit of, being in a manner lost in so large an island as St Domingo, would make an appearance at the Mole. Bombardopolis is the place that has been chosen, as the most respectable post. This new city stands on the margin of a plain, which is high enough to be cool. Its territory is covered with a natural savannah, and adorned with groves of palm trees of various kinds. It is not overlooked, which is an uncommon circumstance at St Domingo. It might be made a regular place, and of any strength. If it did not prevent an invasion, it would at least hinder the conquerors from getting a firm establishment upon the coasts.

It were to be wished, say the statesmen, that, from the first moment they begun the works at the Mole, they had at once fortified it to the degree that so advantageous a situation will admit of. It is a treasure, the possession of which should have been secured as soon as it was discovered. Should this precious key of St Domingo, and, indeed, of all America, fall into the hands of the English, which it may very possibly do on the breaking out of a war, which cannot be far off, this Gibraltar of the new world would be more fatal to France and Spain than even that of Europe.

It is no wonder if all the precautions which have been taken hitherto for the defence of St Domingo, have had so little solidity in them. As long as forecast and protection shall be confined to secondary means, which can only protract, not prevent, the conquest of the island, no invariable plan can be pursued. Fixed principles are the charter of such powers as can depend upon their naval force, to prevent the loss of, or secure the recovery of their colonies. Those of France are not guarded by those floating arsenals, which can at the same time attack and defend. Their mother-country is not yet possessed of such a navy as to make her formidable. But does she at least govern her possessions

sessions abroad by the maxims of sound policy and good order? This is what we shall next inquire into.

Examination of the government established in the French islands.

THE British government, ever actuated by the national spirit, which seldom deviates from the true interests of the state, has carried into the new world that right of property which is the ground work of her legislation. From a conviction, that man never thinks he fairly possesses any thing but what he has lawfully acquired, they have, indeed, sold the lands in their islands, but at a very moderate price, to such as were willing to clear them. This method appeared to them the best calculated to hasten the cultivation of the lands, and to prevent partialities and jealousies, the necessary consequences of a distribution guided by caprice or favour.

Is the right of property respected in the French islands?

FRANCE has taken a method seemingly more generous, but not so prudent, that of granting lands to all who applied for them. No regard was paid to their abilities or circumstances; the interest of their patrons determined the extent of the land they obtained. It is true, it was stipulated, that they should begin their settlements within a year after the grant, and not discontinue the clearing of the ground, upon pain of forfeiture. But, besides the hardship of requiring those men to be at the expence of clearing the land, who could not afford to purchase, the penalty fell upon them only, who, not having the advantage of family and fortune, could not make interest with the great; or upon minors, who, being left destitute by the death of their parents, ought rather to have been assisted by the public; whereas every proprietor who was well recommended or supported, was not called to account, though he let his grounds lye fallow.

To this partiality, which evidently retarded the progress of the colonies, we may add a number of ill-judged regulations relative to domestic life. First, it was required of every person who obtained a grant of land,

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to plant 500 trenches of manioc for every slave he had upon his plantation. This order was equally detrimental both to private and public interest, as it compelled the planter to encumber his ground with this ordinary production, when it was able to bear richer crops, and rendered the poor grounds, which were only fit for this kind of culture, useless. This double fault could not but lessen the growth of all kinds of commodities; and indeed this law, which affected the disposal of property, has never been strictly put in execution; but as it has also never been repealed, it still remains a scourge in the hand of any ignorant, capricious, or passionate minister, who may chuse to make use of it against the inhabitants. This evil, however, is not the least of the grievances with which their legislation is chargeable. The restraint of the Agrarian laws is still increased by the burden of the labours imposed upon the vassals.

There was a time in Europe, that of the feudal government, when gold and silver had little or nothing to do with public or private bargains. The nobles served the state, not with their purses, but with their persons; and those of their vassals, who were their property by right of conquest, paid them a kind of quit-rent or homage, either in the fruits of the earth, or in so much labour. These customs, so destructive to men and lands, tended to perpetuate that barbarity to which they owed their rise. But at last they were dropped gradually, as the authority of kings prevailed in overthrowing the independence and tyranny of the great, by restoring freedom to the people. The prince, now become the sole master, abolished, as a magistrate, some abuses arising from the right of war, which destroys every other right. But several of these usurpations, which time had consecrated, were still preserved. That of the average, or a certain proportion of labour required of the vassals, has been kept up in some states, where the nobles have lost almost all, and the people have not acquired any advantage by it. The liberty of France is at this day infringed by this public bondage, and this injustice has been methodized, as if to give it a colour of justice. The consequences of this

horrid system have been still more severely felt in the colonies. The culture of these lands, from the nature of the climate and of the productions, requiring expedition, cannot easily spare a number of hands to be sent a great way off, and employed in public works, which are often useless, and should never be carried on but by idle hands. If the mother-country, with all the various means she can employ, has never yet been able to correct or mitigate the hardships of these services, she ought to consider what evils must result from them beyond the seas, where the direction of these works is committed to two overseers, who can neither be directed, censured, nor controuled, in the arbitrary exercise of absolute power. But the burden of these services is light, when compared with that of the taxes.

Are the taxes properly levied in the French islands?

A tax may be defined to be a contribution towards public expence, necessary for the preservation of private property. The peaceable enjoyment of lands and revenues, requires a proper force to defend them from invasion, and a police that secures the liberty of improving them. Whatever is paid towards the maintenance of public order, is right and just; whatever is levied beyond this, is extortion. Now all the government expences, which the mother-country is at for the colonies, are repaid her by the restraint laid upon them, to cultivate for her alone, and in such a manner as is best adapted to her wants. This subjection is the most grievous of all tributes, and ought to exempt them from all other taxes.

Any one must be convinced of this truth who reflects on the difference of situation between the old world and the new. In Europe, subsistence and home-consumption are the principal objects of culture and of manufactures; exportation only carries off the overplus. In the islands, the whole is to be exported. There, subsistence and property are alike precarious.

In Europe, war only deprives the manufacturer and the husbandman of their foreign trade; the business still goes on at home. In the islands, hostilities annihilate every

every thing; there are no more sales, no more bargains; no more circulation; the planter hardly recovers his costs.

In Europe, the owner of a small estate, who can afford to lay out but little, improves his land as much in proportion as he that has a wide domain and immense treasures. In the islands, the improvement of the smallest plantation requires a pretty good stock to begin with.

In Europe, it is commonly one citizen that is indebted to another; and the state is not impoverished by these private debts. The debts of the islands are of a different nature. Many planters, in order to carry on the labour of clearing their grounds, and to repair the losses incurred by the misfortunes of war, which had put a stop to their exports, have been obliged to borrow such large sums, that they may be considered rather as farming the trade, than as proprietors of the plantations.

Whether these reflections have not occurred to the French ministry, or whether particular circumstances have obliged them to depart from their plan, certain it is, they have added fresh taxes to the obligation already laid on the colonies to draw all their necessaries from France, and to send thither all their own commodities. Every negroe has been taxed. In some settlements, this pole-tax has been confined to the working blacks, in others it was laid on all the slaves without distinction. Both these arrangements have been opposed by the colony assembled at St Domingo: Let us now judge of the force of their arguments:

Children, and old and infirm men, make up about one-third of the slaves. Far from being useful to the planter, some of them are only a dead weight, which humanity alone can prompt him to support, while the rest can afford him only distant and uncertain hopes. It is hard to conceive how the treasury should have thought of taxing an object that is already chargeable to the owner.

The pole-tax upon blacks extends beyond the grave; that is to say, it is fixed upon a person who exists no more. Suppose a slave dies after the assessment has

been made, the master must continue to pay the tax, though he is already a great loser by the death of his black, who was a part of his property, and whose labour was a part of his income.

Even the working slaves are not an exact tariff of the appraisement of a planter's income. With a few negroes, a good soil will yield more than a poor one will with a great many. The commodities, tho' they are all procured by the labour of those persons upon whom the tax is equally laid, are not all of the same value. The changing from one kind of culture to another, which the ground requires, suspends for a while the produce of labour. Droughts, inundations, fires, devouring insects, often destroy the fruits of labour. Suppose all things alike, a lesser number of hands makes in proportion a lesser quantity of sugar; either because the whole of the wants must be taken into consideration, or because labour is truly productive only so far as it can seize the most favourable opportunities.

The poll-tax upon blacks becomes a more intolerable grievance still in time of war. A planter who cannot then dispose of his commodities, and must run in debt to support himself and to keep up his land, is further obliged to pay a tax for slaves whose labour will hardly be equivalent to their maintenance. Nay, he is often constrained to send them far from his plantation, for the imaginary wants of the colony, to feed them there at his own expence, and to see them perish, whilst he is under the cruel necessity of replacing them one time or other, if ever he means to retrieve his wasted and sinking lands.

The burden of the poll-tax lay still heavier upon such of the proprietors as were absent from the colony, for these were condemned to pay the tax treble, which was the more unjust, as it was a matter of indifference to France whether her commodities were consumed at home or in the islands. It could not surely be her intention to hinder the emigration of the colonists. It is only by the mildness of the government that citizens can be fixed in a country, not by prohibitions and penalties. Besides, men who, by hazardous labours carried on in a sultry climate, had contributed to the pub-

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lic prosperity, ought to have been indulged in the liberty of ending their days in the temperate regions of the mother-country. Nothing could more effectually rouse the ambition and activity of numbers of idle people, than to be spectators of their fortune, and the state might thus get rid of these useless men to the profit of industry and commerce.

Nothing can be more detrimental to both than this taxing of the blacks, as the necessity of selling obliges the planter to lower the price of his goods. Selling cheap may be an advantage, when it is the result of great plenty, and of a very brisk circulation. But a man is ruined, if he must constantly carry on a losing trade, in order to pay taxes. Taxation is like an ulcer, where the dead flesh devours the living. In proportion as the blood passes into any place by circulation, it is rendered unfit for nourishment. Trade is destroyed by the absorbing channels of the treasury, which is always receiving, but never returns any thing.

Lastly, it is a very difficult matter to levy this tax. Every proprietor must give in an annual account of the number of his slaves. To prevent false entries, they must be verified by clerks or excisemen. Every negro that is not entered must be forfeited; which would be a very absurd practice, because every labouring negro is so much stock, and by seizing him, you diminish the culture, and annihilate the very object for which the duty was laid. Thus, in the colonies, where nothing can prosper without a profound tranquillity, a destructive war is carried on between the collectors of the tax and the planter. Law-suits are numerous, removals frequent, rigorous measures become necessary, and the costs are great and ruinous.

If the negro tax is unjust in its extent, unequal in its division, and complicated in the mode of levying it, the tax laid upon the commodities that are carried out of the colonies is nearly as injudicious. The government ventured to do it from a persuasion that this duty would fall entirely upon the consumer and the merchant; but there cannot be a more dangerous error in political œconomy than this.

The act of consuming does not supply money to buy

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what is consumed; this must be gained by labour; and all labour, if things are traced up to their origin, is in fact paid by the first proprietor out of the produce of the earth. This being the case, no one article can be always growing dearer, but all the rest must rise in proportion. In this situation, there is no profit to be made upon any of them. If this equilibrium between the articles of commerce be removed, the consumption of the advanced article will decrease, and, if it decrease, the price will fall of course, and the dearth will have been only transient.

The merchant can no more take the duty upon him than the consumer. He may, indeed, advance it once or twice; but, if he cannot make a natural and necessary profit upon the commodities so taxed, he will soon drop that branch of trade. To hope that competition will force him to take the payment of the duty out of his profits, is to suppose that his profits were exorbitant, and that the competition, which was then insufficient, will grow brisker when the profits are less. If, on the other hand, things were as they ought to be, and the profits no more than necessary, it is supposing that the competition will subsist, though the profits that gave rise to it subsist no longer. We must admit all these absurdities, or allow that it is the planter in the islands who pays the duty, whether it be levied from the first, second, or hundredth hand.

Far from thus burthening the cultivation of the colonies with taxes, it ought to be encouraged by liberalities, since by the state of prohibition in which their trade is kept, these liberalities, with all the fruits of them, must of necessity return to the mother-country.

If the situation of a state that is involved by losses or mismanagement, will not admit of liberalities, or easing the subjects of their burthens, the payment of the taxes in colonies themselves might, at least, be suppressed, and the produce of them levied at home. This would be the next best system that could be pursued, and would be equally agreeable to the two worlds.

Nothing is so pleasing to an American, as to remove from his sight every thing that denotes his dependence. Wearied with the importunities of collectors, he ab-

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hors a standing tax, and dreads the increase of them. He seeks in vain for that liberty which he thought to have found at the distance of two thousand leagues from Europe. He spurns at a yoke which pursues him through the storms of the ocean. Discontented and inwardly repining at the restraint he still feels, he thinks with indignation on his native country, which, by the name of mother, calls for his blood instead of feeding him. Remove the image of his chains from his sight; let his riches pay their tribute to the mother-country only at landing there, and he will fancy himself free and privileged; though, at the same time, by lowering the value of his own commodities, and enhancing the price of those that come from Europe, he, in fact, ultimately bears the load of a tax of which he is ignorant.

Navigators will also find an advantage in paying duty only upon goods that have reached the place of their destination, in their full value and without any risque, and will restore the capital of their stock along with the profits. They will not then have the mortification of having purchased of the prince the very hazards of shipwreck, and of losing a cargo for which they had paid duty at embarking. Their ships, on the contrary, will bring back in goods the amount of the duty, and the productions being advanced in value about twenty-one per cent. by exportation, the duty will hardly be felt.

Lastly, the consumer himself will be a gainer by it, because the colonist and the merchant cannot benefit by any regulation, of which in time he will not feel the good effects. All the taxes will no sooner be reduced to a single one, but trade will be clogged with fewer formalities, fewer delays, fewer charges; and consequently the goods can be afforded at a cheaper rate.

Even the state might find a considerable political advantage in this. By this new arrangement, there would be such a thing as a country, in outward appearance, exempt from all taxes, and enjoying absolute freedom. Such an event would be the more striking, at a time when the English colonies groan under the burthen of fresh taxes. The contrast would aggravate their

their sufferings; their murmurs and their boldness would know no bounds; they would learn to place some confidence in a government which they have hitherto accused of being tyrannical; and, in case of a revolt in North America, that vast region would be less afraid of putting itself under the protection of France.

This system of moderation, which every thing seems to point out as the fittest, might be easily introduced. All the productions of the islands are subject, at their entry into the kingdom, to the name of *Domaine d'Occident*, or Western Domain, which is fixed at three and a half per cent. with 2 sols * per livre. Their value, which is the rule for the payment of the duty, is determined in the months of January and July. It is fixed at twenty or five and twenty per cent. below the real course. The western office allows besides a more considerable tare than the seller in trade does. Add to this duty, that which the commodities pay at the custom-houses of the colonies, which brings in much the same, and those that are paid in the inland parts of the islands, and we shall have the whole of the revenue which the government draws from the settlements in America.

If this fund was confounded with the other revenues of the state, we might be apprehensive that it was not applied to the purpose of its destination, which should be solely the protection of the islands. The unforeseen exigencies of the royal treasury would infallibly divert it into another channel. There are some moments when the critical state of the disease will not admit of calculating the inconveniencies of the remedy. The most urgent necessity engrosses the attention. Nothing then is safe from the gripe of arbitrary power, urged by the wants of the present moment. The ministry continues to take, in hopes of soon replacing; but these hopes are always baffled by fresh wants.

Hence it appears, that it would be highly necessary that the chest destined for the duties on the productions of the colonies should be quite separate from the revenues of the kingdom. The monies deposited there would always be ready to answer the demands of those settlements.

* A penny.

settlements. The colonist, who always has stock to send over to Europe, would gladly give it for bills of exchange, when he was once assured that they would meet with no delays or difficulties. This kind of bank would soon create a new tie and fresh correspondence between the mother-country and the islands; the court would be better acquainted with the state of their affairs in these distant countries, and would recover the credit they have long since lost, but which is of the utmost consequence, especially in time of war. We shall now put an end to our discussions on taxes, and pass on to what concerns the militia.

THE French islands, like those of other nations, had at first no regular troops. The adventurers, who had conquered them, took a pride in defending themselves, and the descendants of those intrepid men thought themselves strong enough to guard their own possessions. They had nothing, indeed, to do, but to repulse a few vessels, which came and landed some sailors and soldiers, as undisciplined as themselves.

Is the militia well regulated in the French islands?

Things are now changed. As these settlements became richer, it was to be expected that they would sooner or later be attacked by European fleets and armies, and this made it necessary to send them other defenders. The event has shewn the insufficiency of a few scattered battalions, to make head against the land and sea forces of England. The colonists themselves have been convinced that their own efforts could never prevent a revolution, and fearing that a fruitless resistance would only exasperate the enemy, they were more inclined to capitulate than to fight. Having become political calculators, they felt themselves unfit for military operations, and paid their money to be discharged from a service, which, though glorious in its principle, had degenerated into a burthensome servitude. The militia was suppressed in 1764.

This act of compliance has been applauded by those who only considered this institution as the means of preserving the colonies from all foreign invasions. They imagined,

imagined, very judiciously, that it was unreasonable to require that men, who were grown old under the hardships of a scorching climate, in order to raise a large fortune, should expose themselves to the same dangers as those poor victims of our ambition, who are perpetually hazarding their lives for five-pence a-day. Such a sacrifice has appeared unnatural, and the ministry, who gave up so vain and burthenfome a defence, have received applause.

Others, who are better acquainted with the American settlements, have not judged so favourably of this innovation. The militia, say they, is necessary to preserve the interior police of the islands, to prevent the revolt of the slaves, to check the incursions of the fugitive negroes, to hinder the banditti from assembling in troops, to protect the navigation along the coasts, and to keep off the corsairs. If the inhabitants are not embodied, if they have neither commanders nor standards, which of them will march to the assistance of his neighbour? There is none to warn him of his danger, none to command him; and that harmony and uniformity of action, without which nothing is done properly, would be totally interrupted.

These reflections, which, tho' striking and natural, had at first escaped the court of Versailles, have quickly made her retract. They restored the militia faster than they had abolished it. As early as the year 1766, the Leeward islands submitted to it without any great resistance, tho' an opposition might have been expected from the continuance of the new taxes, when their object no longer subsisted. St Domingo warmly expostulated against this abuse of an authority, which was too hasty and too fickle in its proceedings not to excite murmurings.

A philosophical administrator, who was eye-witness to the opposition which the inhabitants of St Domingo made to the re-establishment of a forced militia, proposed to make it voluntary. He never doubted but that the prospect of glory or fortune would have induced half the colony, whose example would have influenced the other half, to solicit as an honour what they abhorred as a yoke. But this expedient, ingenious as

it was, and effectual as it would have been, was improper, because it would have affected that uniformity which ought to subsist between islands that are under the same government. Such a distinction would have laid the foundation of jealousies and divisions, which would, sooner or later, have proved fatal to the colonies, if not to the mother-country itself.

Without any of these political artifices, the people of St Domingo have resumed the military service with a reluctance, founded upon grievances which cannot be too soon redressed. It is well known, that a militia is a great restraint upon civil liberty, which they are more jealous of in the colonies than we are in Europe, where we hear of nothing but authority. It exposes the citizen to numberless vexations. The evils it has occasioned have stamped a sense of horror at this kind of servitude, which none can wonder at but tyrants or slaves. The business is, if possible, to eradicate the impressions of the past, and remove all mistrust for the future. The condescension and moderation of government must put an end to the apprehensions of the colonies, by making all those alterations in the form of the militia which are consistent with its object, which is to maintain public order and safety. The welfare of the people is the great end of all authority. If the actions of the sovereign do not tend to this point, he will only live upon money or paper, soon worn out by time, and despised by posterity. In vain does flattery raise superb and numerous monuments to princes. The hand of man erects them; but it is the heart that consecrates them, and affection that makes them immortal. Without this, public homage is only a proof of the meanness of the people, not of the greatness of the ruler. There is one statue in Paris, the sight of which makes every heart exult with sentiments of affection. Every eye is turned with complacency towards that image of paternal kindness and universal benevolence. The silent tears of the oppressed call upon it, and secretly bless the hero it immortalizes. After the elapse of two centuries, all voices join to celebrate his memory. His name is held in veneration to the uttermost parts of America. In every heart he protests against the abuses
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of authority ; he declares against the usurpations of the rights of the people ; he promises the subjects to redress their grievances, and an increase of prosperity ; and he demands both of the ministry.

Is the regulation of inheritance properly settled in the French islands ?

It is scarce credible, that a law, seemingly dictated by nature ; a law which occurs instantly to every just and good man ; which leaves no doubt in the mind as to its rectitude and utility ; it is scarce credible, that such a law should sometimes be prejudicial to the maintenance of society, stop the progress of colonies, divert them from the end of their destination, and gradually pave the way to their ruin. Strange as it may seem, this law is no other than the equal division of estates among children or co-heirs. This law, so consonant to nature, should be abolished in America.

This division was necessary at the first formation of colonies. Immense tracts of lands were to be cleared. This could not be done without people, nor could men, who had quitted their own country for want, be otherwise fixed in those distant and desert regions, than by assigning them a property. Had the government refused to grant them lands, these adventurers would have wandered about from place to place, with the disappointment of beginning numberless settlements, and bringing none to bear so as to be beneficial to the mother-country.

But since inheritances, too extensive at first, have in process of time been reduced, by a series of successions, and by the sub-divisions of shares, to such a compass as renders them fit to facilitate cultivation ; since they have been so limited as not to lye fallow for want of hands proportionable to their extent, a further division of lands would bring them again to nothing. In Europe, an obscure man, who has but a few acres of land, will make that little estate go farther, in proportion, than an opulent man can the immense property he is possessed of, either by inheritance or by chance. In America, the nature of the productions, which are very valuable, the uncertainty of the crops, which are but of few kinds,

kinds. the quantity of slaves, of cattle, of utensils necessary for a plantation; all this requires a large stock, which they have not in some, and will soon not have in any colonies, if the lands are parcelled out and divided more and more by hereditary successions.

If a father leaves an estate of 30,000 livres * a-year, and this estate is equally divided between three children, they will all be ruined, if they make three distinct plantations; the one, because he has been made to pay dear for the buildings, and because he has too few negroes and too little land in proportion; the other two, because they must build before they can begin the culture of their land. They will all be equally ruined, if the whole plantation remains in the hands of one of the three. In a country where a creditor is in a worse state than any other man, estates have risen to an immoderate value. The possessor of the whole will be very fortunate, if he is obliged to pay no more for interest than the net produce of the plantation. Now, as the primary law of our nature is, the procuring of subsistence, he will begin by living without paying. His debts will accumulate; he will soon become insolvent; and the confusion consequent upon such a situation will end in the ruin of the whole family.

The only way to remedy these disorders, is to abolish the equality of divisions. In this enlightened age we should see the necessity of letting the colonies be more stocked with implements than with men. The wisdom of the legislature will, doubtless, contrive some method of providing for those who will be stript, and in some measure sacrificed to the welfare of the community. They ought to be placed upon fresh lands, and to subsist by their own labour. This is the only way to maintain men of this kind; and their industry would open a fresh source of wealth to the state.

At the conclusion of the peace a favourable opportunity offered itself, for making the proposed alteration in St Lucia and Guiana. The French ought not to have neglected this opportunity, perhaps the only one, of repealing the law relating to division, by distributing

to those, whose expectations they had frustrated, such lands as they intended for culture. The immense sums that have been thrown away upon these lands to no purpose, would have been much better bestowed in enabling these people to clear and cultivate them. Men inured to the climate, acquainted with the only kind of culture that could possibly be thought of, encouraged by the example, assistance, and advice of their own families, and aided by the slaves with which government would have supplied them, were much fitter for this purpose than a set of profligate men, collected from the very sinks of Europe, and much more likely to raise the new colonies to that pitch of wealth and prosperity which might be expected. Unfortunately we were not aware, that the first colonies in America must have increased by slow degrees, with the loss of a great number of men, or by extraordinary exertions of bravery and patience, because they had no competition to support; but the succeeding settlements can only be formed in the way of generation, as an old swarm begets a new one. The overflowings of population in one island must spread into another, and the superfluities of a rich colony must furnish necessities to an infant settlement. This is the natural order which good policy points out to maritime and commercial powers. Every other method is irrational and destructive. Though the court of Versailles has overlooked this plain principle, which is productive of so much good, that is no reason why they should reject the proposal of putting a stop to the farther division of lands. If the necessity of such a law is evident, it must be enacted, though the present period be less favourable than that which hath been neglected. When the decay of the plantations is repaired, by the suppression of that parcelling of lands which cuts off all the springs of increase, we may then compel them to clear themselves of the debts with which they are now oppressed.

Has the payments of debts contracted in the French islands been judiciously provided for?

THE French islands, like all others in America, can only be cultivated by blacks. Their climate lays them under a necessity of purchasing labourers.

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To procure them, they must have capitals; and the first inhabitants had none. They raised them by trade; which, therefore, gave these valuable settlements their first existence. This kind of assistance, which, perhaps, has been since too easily granted, has involved them in debts, which have increased, as they proceeded in clearing a greater extent of land.

The equality of partition between the several heirs, had raised up creditors within the colonies, as there were already without. As the colonies grew richer, their credit increased in proportion to the multiplicity of divisions. When the population increased to such a degree that the number of colonists exceeded that of plantations, the superfluous numbers then remaining unemployed became creditors to estates they did not occupy, and were therefore not only useless, but even burdensome to cultivation. We have just pointed out a way to prevent the necessity of this credit within the islands; but in what manner shall the debts contracted abroad be discharged?

We are told, that the planters should spend but a part of their income, and reserve the rest for the fulfilling of their engagements. But it is not considered, that those who could afford to make these savings, are just the very people that owe nothing; whereas the debtors have such a scanty income, that they cannot possibly save any thing. Besides, nothing would be more unreasonable than to introduce this system of economy into the colonies. As the value of their produce is entirely owing to exchange, and that in this case the exchange would be in a manner annihilated, because it would be confined to articles of small value and of mere necessity; the Americans would either be obliged to raise but few of their own commodities, or to give them for nothing. Should the mother-country be willing to make up in money the deficiencies in the sale of their merchandise, then all the gold that is drawn from one part of America would return to the other. There is a power, known by the superiority of its naval force, which, after ten years of such a trade, would be sure of finding in these islands a compensation for any war it might undertake. Would it not, therefore,

be highly impolitic for France to invite that power to attack her settlements abroad ?

* Traders are no less interested than the government in the perpetuity of debts. The colonies were first established upon credit. When the first cultivators had cleared themselves, the loan has been renewed to their successors ; and the present possessors still enjoy the same benefit. If they were compelled to pay off this loan, it might soon be done ; but culture would suffer by it ; and, though it might not possibly degenerate, yet it would nevertheless be deprived of the first fruits of virgin lands, which are always most fertile. Traders would then find fewer commodities to buy in the islands ; they would have no demand for slaves, utensils, and all other articles necessary for new settlements, and which are almost as considerable as those which are requisite for the wants or luxury of the settled plantations. In process of time, their transactions would be still more reduced. It is well known how reluctantly they see the rich planter accustom himself to send his own productions to Europe, to fetch his own consumption from thence, and reduce his agents to the bare profits of commission. If that dependence, which is a necessary consequence of debts, should cease, it would no longer be a few planters, but the whole colony, that would make their own purchases and sales in the mother-country : They would all become traders, and would even soon have no competitors, because they alone would be acquainted with the measure of their own wants.

Credit, therefore, is evidently the basis of all useful connections between the merchants of France and her colonies ; and to restore their stock, would be in effect to deprive them of their profits. Unreasonably have they complained, for these forty years past, that the delays they experience in their payments have ruined them beyond recovery. The fortunes that have been made in the ports of France by their intercourse with the islands are a proof of the injustice of these complaints.

However, political utility, or even the necessity of the colonies being in debt to the mother-country, can
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by no means cancel the obligation every private man is under to fulfil his engagements. Though evil may be the effect, frequently even the cause of good, yet the man who commits it cannot on that account be justified or excused. It is a matter of indifference to the government whether a certain mass of wealth is in such or such hands; but it can never be conducive to the public welfare that any man should think himself at liberty not to pay his debts. The treasury itself, if it is under any engagements, must clear itself by the means and rules of justice. A public bankruptcy of the state is a scandalous thing, still more prejudicial to the morals of society than to the fortunes of individuals. A time will come, when all these iniquities shall be summoned before the tribunal of nations, and that the power which has committed them shall be judged by its victims. The debts of America, therefore, ought to be paid; but it must be done imperceptibly, and not by sudden or violent measures. Whilst the old debts are paying off, new ones will be contracted, which will perpetuate, as it were, that chain of dependence that links the fortunes of Europe with those of the colonies. It is by judicial means that the creditors of the trade of the islands are to be satisfied. True justice is ever uniform in itself; its favours and punishments are equally shewn to all. If the execution of it is committed to the arbitrary will of those who govern, as it has hitherto been in the colonies, it necessarily degenerates into tyranny. It is oftentimes a hardship upon debtors, who are compelled to fail in the most sacred engagements, in order to fulfil the most trifling, and to sacrifice part of their income, and sometimes of their stock, by sales made at an improper season, and without any of the proper forms. It is always unjust for the creditors themselves. It is neither the oldest, nor he that has most right, nor yet he that wants it most, who is first paid: It is the most powerful, the best patronized, the most active, or the most violent; whereas the law only ought to decide.

That law which, in the colonies, allows of the actual seizure of the plantations, is impracticable. A proof of it is, that no man has ever yet had recourse to it, though there

there have always been dishonest debtors in the islands, and clamorous creditors, who would not have neglected this mode of recovery, if it could have been pursued with success.

The method of personal seizure, which some have proposed to substitute to the seizure of goods and chattels, would not be more effectual. It would be no easy matter to arrest a planter surrounded with a multitude of slaves, upon a plantation standing by itself. His imprisonment would prove as ruinous to his creditors and to the colony as to himself. His negroes would grow riotous in his absence; they would do no work, but would go and plunder the neighbouring plantations.

But might not the negroes of a debtor be seized and sold? Then the slaves who should cease to work upon one plantation would be employed upon another, and the colony be no loser.

This expedient is only a specious one; and we must know but little of the character of the negroes, if we trust to it. They are a kind of machines, not easily wound up, and not to be removed with safety to a fresh manufacture. A change of place, of master, of method, of employment, requires the contracting of fresh habits, and such an exertion as these miserable creatures are hardly capable of, who are already groaning under the necessity of hard labour, which ill suits their voluptuous disposition. They cannot live without their mistresses and their children, which are their dearest comforts, and the only thing that makes them endure life. Separated from this only solace to their woes, they pine away and sicken, and frequently desert, or at least they work but with reluctance and carelessness.

Besides, it would be no easy matter to seize upon those blacks. Fifty, a hundred, or two hundred slaves, would not tamely suffer themselves to be thrown in chains by a few bailiffs; and they would soon disperse, if any attempt should be made to enter the plantation by force. If one should endeavour to seize them in the towns where they go to sell their goods, they would soon keep away, and a scarcity of provisions would be the consequence of almost universal desertion.

Suppose

Suppose all these difficulties could be removed; this expedient would still be improper, because, in securing the payment of one creditor, it would ruin many others. The smallest sugar plantations employ sixty or seventy slaves upon the best lands, and fourscore or a hundred where the ground is but indifferent. The number cannot be lessened without putting a stop to the tillage. The seizing of fifteen or twenty blacks, is enough to ruin a plantation, and to destroy an important culture, to make a capital of 150 or 300,000 livres* lie dead, and a skilful planter quite insolvent. It will be said, perhaps, that the owner, being forced to sell, the purchaser would reinstate the plantation; but it is well known that there are no men on the islands able to pay ready money; that all purchases are made upon a very long credit, and even with a tacit expectation of obtaining further delays. Take away this credit, and there will not be a single purchaser to be found.

No planters surely would be so rash as to venture upon a considerable undertaking, with a prospect of certain ruin, in case fortune and the elements should not favour his endeavours, so as to make good his engagements to a day. The dread of want and infamy will become general, and then there will be no more borrowing, no more business, no more circulation. Activity will sink into idleness, and credit will be destroyed by the very system that was meant to restore it. These are no imaginary fears; the deplorable events of the year 1750 shew that they are too well founded. At that memorable and unfortunate period for St Domingo, a permission was extorted from the government to seize the negroes for the planter's debts. The first executions of this kind, though unsuccessful, spread terror and consternation throughout the colony. The confusion was inconceivable, and all was tending to ruin. The merchants who had solicited this odious law, thought themselves very happy that they could obtain the repeal of it.

No expedient, therefore, has been found out for the security

* From about 7000 l. to upwards of 13,000 l.

security of creditors, but what is prejudicial to the prosperity of the colonies, and consequently to that of the monarchy. Yet the secret springs of politics most certainly afford some means to reconcile the interests of individuals with those of the public; and it is the business of statesmen to find them out. This law of equity will be approved of, even by those who are sufferers by it, if it is introduced by reasonable methods, the only ones, perhaps, that should be employed with civilized men, at least the easiest and the safest. A planter, acquainted with the course of public business, will be sensible that the facility of not paying becomes burdensome to him from the impossibility of finding credit, but upon such terms as will balance the risque of lending. Whether he seeks it to increase or to preserve his stock, he will obtain none but to his ruin. His situation is the same as that of minors, who can never borrow but upon hard terms, of usurers accustomed to indemnify themselves beforehand for the delays and for the hazards they run.

But if the planter is not to be brought to a sense of his duty by motives of interest; if it is dangerous to have recourse to compulsive methods to make him fulfil his engagements, why should not the legislator try what may be done upon the principle of honour, which is a most powerful motive in monarchies, as it is the ground-work and spring of their constitution? Is not opinion as coercive as force? Stamp but a mark of infamy upon the fraudulent debtor, declare that he has forfeited all the distinctions he enjoyed, render him incapable of ever exercising any public function, and we need not apprehend that he will sport with a law of this kind. But then the tribunals of justice must in this respect be those of honour. Let the defaulter be tried and condemned with the several forms which make all other laws sacred. The most rapacious of men, and especially the American planters, sacrifice a part of their lives to hard labour, with no other view than to enjoy their fortune. But there is no enjoyment for a man who is branded with infamy. Observe only how punctually all debts of honour are paid. It is not an excess of delicacy, it is not the love of justice, that brings,

brings back the ruined gamester within four and twenty hours to the feet of his creditor, who, perhaps is no better than a sharper. It is the sense of honour; it is the dread of being excluded from society. The most interested man aims at enjoyment, and, without honour, none can be obtained.

But in what age, at what period, do we here invoke the sacred name of honour? should not the government set the example of that justice, the practice of which it means to inculcate? Is it possible that public opinion should disgrace individuals for actions which the state openly commits? When infamy has crept into families, into great houses, into the highest places, even into the camp and the sanctuary; can there be any sense of shame remaining? What man will henceforth be jealous of his honour, while those who are called men of honour know of no other than that of being rich to get places, or of getting places to grow rich; when a man must cringe in order to rise; please the great and the women to serve the state; and when the gifts of pleasing imply at least an indifference for every virtue? Shall honour, which seems to be banished from some parts of Europe, go and take refuge in America? Why should this be despaired of, before it has been tried? If the experiment should not answer, the debtors who should refuse to pay their debts, should be treated, in the French islands, as they are in those that are subject to England and Holland. The three nations have alike concentrated the connections of their American settlements in the mother-country.

ALL the colonies have not had the same origin. The first took their rise from the restless spirit of some tribes of barbarians, who having long wandered through desert countries, fixed at last, from mere weariness, in any country where they might form a nation. Other people, driven out of their own territory by some powerful enemy, or allured by chance to a better climate than their own, have removed thither, and shared the lands

Has the mother-country, in compelling the islands to deliver their produce only to herself, sufficiently secured the exportation of them?

lands with the natives. An excess of population, an abhorrence for tyranny, factions, and revolutions, have induced other citizens to quit their native country, and to build new cities in foreign climes. The spirit of conquest made some soldiers settle in the countries they had subdued, in order to secure the property of themselves. None of these colonies were first formed with a view to trade. Even those that were founded by Tyre, Carthage, and Marseilles, which were all commercial republics, were only meant for necessary retreats upon barbarous coasts, and for marts, where ships that were come from different ports, and tired with a long voyage, reciprocally made their exchanges.

The conquest of America gave the Europeans the first idea of a new kind of settlement, the basis of which is agriculture. The governments that founded those colonies, chose that such of their subjects as they sent thither should not have it in their power to consume any thing but what they drew from the mother-country, or to sell the produce of their lands but to the mother-country. This double obligation has appeared to all nations to be consonant to the law of nature, independent of all conventions, and self-evident. They have not looked upon an exclusive intercourse with their own colonies as an immoderate compensation for the expences of settling and preserving them. This has constantly been the system of Europe relative to America.

France had never yet departed from it; when a man of genius, noted for the extent of his ideas, and the energy of his expressions, attempted to mitigate the severity of this principle. He alledged, that, to allow the importation of such foreign goods as cannot easily be had from France, and at an extravagant price, was increasing a prosperity in the colonies, which must sooner or later flow back to the original country, to which they will send more commodities, and afford a brisker sale for their own produce. This opinion spread a universal alarm in all the parts of the kingdom. They exclaimed, that this competition was

an infringement of the most sacred rights of the state, and would dry up the principal sources of its wealth.

This circumstance has been the subject of much altercation; but it has not been considered in its most important light. The disputants, and the public by whom they were judged, only attending to the interests of culture and commerce, lost sight of the grand political object, which is the preservation of the colonies. The truth is, that we should run the risque of losing them, if foreign ships were admitted into their harbours.

Above a century ago, England laid the foundations of an immense empire in the vast wilds of North America, which went on but slowly at first, but now makes a daily rapid progress. Its power, long curbed by an enemy, ever upon the watch, and ever ready to attack its back settlements, has nothing now that can restrain it, since the acquisition of Canada and of the most valuable part of Louisiana. This people, delivered by these conquests from all uneasiness on the side of the continent, may one time or other be tempted to turn their ambitious view towards the neighbouring islands. Even now, they want nothing to pursue the stream of their prosperities, but a population adequate to the extent of their territory. Amongst the causes which may promote this population, none would be more likely to hasten it, than a standing intercourse with the French colonies, which being in want of the very articles that North America affords, would, by purchasing their productions, enable them to raise more, and to augment their strength. No doubt, the court of Versailles is too well informed to sacrifice the safety of the islands to the accessory advantage that might accrue from a free trade for a few trifling objects.

But if, on the one hand, it is incumbent on us to cut off from our rivals this road to wealth, and, of course to conquest; on the other hand, it is necessary to take care that our islanders should never want a market to dispose of all their commodities. The colonies can spare us yearly, besides what they keep for their own consumption, a hundred thousand casks of melasses and rum,

rum, worth about 5,000,000 livres *. By an ill judged selfishness, we have deprived them and ourselves of this benefit, for fear of hurting the sale of our own brandies. The spirits drawn from sugar, always inferior to those extracted from wine, can only be consumed by poor nations, or by the lower sort in the rich ones. They will never be preferred to any but malt spirits; and these are not distilled in France. There will always be a demand for ours, even in the islands, for the use of that class of men who can afford to pay for them. The government, therefore, can never too soon retract so unjust and so fatal an error, and ought to admit melasses and rum into our ports, to be consumed there, or wherever else there may be a demand for them. Nothing would more extend their consumption than to authorize French navigators to carry them directly to the foreign markets. This favour ought even to be extended to the whole produce of the colonies. As an opinion that clashes with so many interests and so many prejudices may chance to be contested, it will be proper to unfold its principles.

The French islands furnish the mother-country with sugars, coffee, cotton, indigo, and other commodities, that are partly consumed at home, and partly disposed of in foreign countries, which send us in exchange either money, or other articles we are in want of. These same islands receive in return from the mother-country, cloths, provisions, and implements of husbandry. Such is the twofold destination of the colonies. In order to fulfil it, they must be rich. In order to be rich, they must grow large crops, and be able to dispose of them at the best price: And that they may fetch the best price, the sale of them must be as brisk as possible. To obtain this, it must be made entirely free. In order to make it as free as possible, it must be clogged with no formalities, no expences, no labours, no needless incumbrances. These truths, demonstrated by their close connection with each other, must determine whether it is advantageous that the trade of the colonies should be subjected to the delays and expences of a staple in France.

These

* 218,750 l.

These intermediate expences must necessarily fall, either upon the consumer or upon the planter. If upon the former, he will consume less, because his means do not increase in proportion to his expences; if upon the latter, as his produce brings in less, he will be less able to make the necessary advances for the next crop, and of course his lands will yield less. The evident progress of these destructive consequences is so little attended to, that every day we hear people confidently say, that merchandise, before it is consumed, must pass through many hands, and undergo many charges, both for handicraft and carriage, and that, as these charges employ and maintain a number of persons, they are conducive to the population and strength of a state. Men are so blinded by prejudice, as not to see, that, if it is advantageous that commodities, before they are consumed, should undergo a twofold expence, this advantage will still be increased, to the greater emolument of the nation, if this expence should amount to four, eight, twelve, or thirty times more. Then, indeed, all nations might break up their highways, fill up their canals, prohibit the navigation of their rivers; they might even exclude animals from the labours of the field, and employ none but men in these works, in order to add to the expences that precede the consumption of the produce. Such are the absurdities we must maintain, if we admit the false principles we are now opposing. But political truths must be long canvassed before they are felt. Many errors have been introduced among statesmen, as well as among the bulk of the people, without examination. The French ministry, long blinded by that darkness in which they suffered their nation to remain, had not yet acquired a sufficient degree of knowledge to discover what kind of administration was fittest for the colonies; and they are still equally ignorant of the form of government best calculated to make them prosper.

THE French colonies, settled by profligate men, who fled from the restraints or punishment of the law, seemed at first to stand in need of no-

Is the authority in the French islands consigned to

*to those hands
that are most
proper to make
them flourish?*

thing but a strict police; they were, therefore, committed to chiefs whose authority was absolute. The spirit of intrigue, natural to all courts, but more especially familiar to a nation where gallantry gives the women an universal ascendant, has at all times filled the higher posts in America with men of dissolute morals, loaded with debts and vices. The ministry, from some consciousness of shame, and the fear of raising them where their disgrace was known, have sent them beyond sea, to improve or retrieve their fortunes, among people who were ignorant of their character. An ill judged compassion, and that false court-maxim, that villainy is necessary, and villains are useful, made them coolly sacrifice the peace of the planters, the safety of the colonies, and the very interests of the state, to a set of wretches only fit to be imprisoned. These rapacious and dissolute men stifled the seeds of all that was good and laudable, and checked the progress of that prosperity which was rising spontaneously.

Arbitrary power carries along with it so subtle a poison, that even those men who went over with honest intentions were soon corrupted. If ambition, avarice, and pride, had not begun to spoil them, they would not have been proof against flattery, which never fails to raise its meanness upon general slavery, and to advance its own fortune by public calamity.

The few governors who escaped corruption, meeting with no support in an arbitrary administration, were continually falling from one mistake into another. It is not men, but the laws, that ought to govern men. If the governors are deprived of this common rule, this standard of their judgments, all right, all safety, and all civil liberty will be at an end. Nothing will then be seen but contradictory decisions, transient and opposite regulations, and orders, which, for want of fundamental maxims, will have no connection with each other. If the cod of laws was cancelled, even in the best constituted empire, it would soon appear that uprightness alone was not sufficient to govern it well. The wisest men would be inadequate to such a task.

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As they would not all be of the same disposition, and as each of them would not always be in the same opinion, the state would soon be overturned. This kind of confusion was perpetual in the French colonies, and the more so, as the governors made but a short stay in one place, and were commonly recalled before they had time to make any arrangements. After they had proceeded without a guide for three years in a new country, and upon unformed plans of police and laws, these rulers were replaced by others, who, in as short a space, had not time to form any connection with the people they were to govern, nor to ripen their projects into that justice, which, when tempered with mildness, can alone secure the execution of them. This want of precedents, and of experience, so much intimidated one of these absolute magistrates, that, out of delicacy, he would not venture to decide upon the common occurrences. Not but what he was aware of the inconveniences of his irresolution; but, though an able man, he did not think himself qualified to be a legislator, and therefore did not chuse to usurp the authority of one.

These disorders, however, might easily have been prevented by substituting an equitable legislation, firm, and independent of private will, to a military government, violent in itself, and fit only for critical and perilous times. But this scheme, which has often been proposed, was disliked by the governors, jealous of absolute power, which, formidable in itself, is always odious in a subject. These slaves, escaped from the secret tyranny of the court, were remarkably attached to that form of justice which prevails in Asiatic governments, by which they kept even their own dependents in awe. The reformation was rejected by some governors, who, though virtuous in other respects, did not consider, that, by reserving to themselves the right of doing good, they left it in the power of their successors to do ill with impunity. All declared loudly against a plan of legislation that tended to lessen the dependence of the people; and the court was weak enough to give way to their insinuation and advice, from a propensity to arbitrary power natural to princes and their ministers.

They thought they provided sufficiently for their colonies by giving them an intendant to balance the power of the governor.

These distant settlements, which till then had groaned under the yoke of one power only, now became a prey to two, equally dangerous by their division and their union. When they were at variance they divided the minds of the people, sowed discord among their adherents, and kindled a kind of civil war. The rumour of their dissensions was at length brought to Europe, where each party had its protectors, who were animated by pride or interest to support them in their places. When they agreed, either because their good or bad intentions happened to be the same, or because the one had got an entire ascendancy over the other, the colonists were in a worse condition than ever. Whatever oppression these victims laboured under, their cries were never heard in the mother-country, who looked upon the harmony that subsisted between their delegates as the most certain proof of a perfect administration.

The fate of the French colonies is not much changed. Their governors, besides having the disposal of the regular troops, have a right to insist the inhabitants, to order them to what works they think proper, to employ them as they please in time of war, and even to make use of them for conquest. Intrusted with unlimited authority, and desirous of exerting all the powers that can establish or extend it, they take upon themselves the cognizance of civil debts. The debtor is summoned, thrown into prison or into a dungeon, and compelled to pay without any other formalities; and this is what they call the service, or the military department. The intendants have the sole management and disposal of the finances, and generally order the collecting of them. They inquire into all causes, both civil and criminal, whether justice has not yet taken cognizance of them, or whether they have already been brought before the superior tribunals; and this is what they call administration. The governors and intendants jointly grant the lands that have not yet been given away, and judge of all differences that arise respecting old possessions. This arrangement puts the fortunes

tunes

tunes of all the colonists into their hands, or into those of their clerks and dependents; and consequently makes all property precarious, and occasions the utmost confusion.

In mechanics, the farther the resisting powers are removed from the center, the more the moving force must be increased; in like manner we are told, the colonies can not be secured any otherwise than by a harsh and absolute government. If so, Sir William Petty was in the right to disapprove of these sort of settlements. The earth had better remain unpeopled, or thinly inhabited, than that some powers should be extended to the misfortune of the people. It is incumbent upon France to oppose this system of an Englishman against colonies, by improving more and more in the method of governing them. That enlightened spirit which distinguishes the present age, whatever is said by those who ascribe the vices inseparable from luxury to the contempt of certain prejudices; and the bad morals which proceed from the passions of the great, and from the abuse of power, to the liberty of thinking and writing; that enlightened spirit, which still supports and guides us, will one day restore the government to a sense of its true interests. We shall be made sensible, that there has been no justice in our colonies, because they had no fixed laws, the maintenance of which was intrusted to proper tribunals. If this set of men, always enslaved, always oppressed, have not hitherto been thought to deserve this mark of our confidence, let us make them worthy of it by granting it. Their souls will be enflamed with the sacred enthusiasm of public spirit, when once they can devote themselves to it without fear or anxiety. This truly patriotic zeal, will kindle of itself, if these judicial bodies are composed of magistrates born in the colonies.

Nothing appears to be more consonant to the ends of sound policy, than to allow these islanders the right of governing themselves, provided it be in subordination to the mother-country; nearly in the same manner as a boat follows all the directions of the ship it is fastened to. It will, perhaps, be objected, that the people in those remote islands, being continually renewed by the

fluctuation of commerce, this will naturally bring in a number of worthless men; and that it will be long before we can expect to see those manners and that sagacity among them, which will be productive of public spirit, and of that dignity which is requisite to support the weight of business and the interests of a nation. This objection might have some foundation, if we attended merely to the character of those Europeans who are driven to America by their wants or their vices; who, by thus transporting themselves, either by choice or from other motives, are strangers every where, commonly corrupted by the want of laws, ill supplied by an arbitrary police, by that depraved taste for dominion, which results from the abuse of slavery, and by the dazzling lustre of a great fortune, which makes them forget their former obscurity. But this class of men ought to have no share in the administration, which should be wholly committed to proprietors, mostly born in the colonies; since justice is the natural consequence of property, and none are more interested in the good government of a country than those who are entitled by their birth to the largest possessions in it. These creoles, who have naturally a great share of penetration, a frankness of temper, an elevation of soul, and a certain love of justice that arises from these noble dispositions, would be so sensible of the marks of esteem and confidence which would be shewn them by the mother-country, by intrusting them with the interior management of their own, that they would grow fond of that fertile soil, take a pride in decorating it, and be happy in introducing all the comforts of a civilized society. Instead of that antipathy to France, which is a reflection upon her ministers, and upbraides them with their harshness, we should see in the colonies that attachment which paternal kindness always inspires into children. Instead of that secret eagerness with which, in time of war, they run to meet a foreign yoke, we should see them uniting their efforts to prevent or repulse an invasion. Fear will restrain men under the immediate eye of a powerful and terrible master; but affection alone can command them at a distance. This is, perhaps, the only spring that acts upon the frontier provinces.

provinces of an extensive kingdom, whilst the effeminate and rapacious inhabitants of the metropolis are kept in awe by authority. Attachment to the sovereign is a principle which cannot be too much encouraged, or too much extended; but, if it is neither merited nor returned, he will not enjoy it long. Then there will be no more joy in our public festivals, no transports in our rejoicings, no involuntary acclamations at the sight of the beloved idol. Curiosity will bring a throng wherever there is a show; but contentment will not appear in any countenance. A sullen discontent will arise, and spread from one province to another, and from the mother-country to the colonies. When all our fortunes are injured or threatened at once, the alarm and the commotion becomes general. Repeated strokes of authority, hurried on by the hand that ventures to exert them, wound every heart, and fall successively upon all bodies of men. The avengers of crimes, and supporters of the rights of the colonists, are brought up, even from America, and confined like malefactors in the prisons of Europe. Our arms, which seemed to be blunted before the enemy, are sharpened against these valuable subjects of the state. Even those who were not able to defend them during the war, are employed to spread terror among them in time of peace. Is it thus that colonies are preserved, and their prosperity promoted? Rome learnt of her enemies how to conquer the old world; let France now learn of her rival how to people and cultivate the new.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.